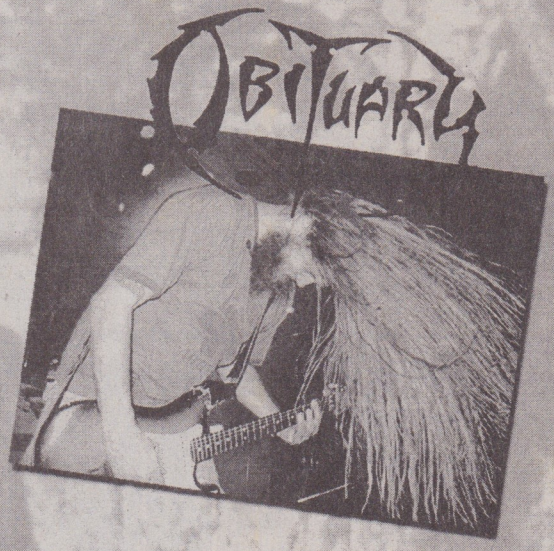
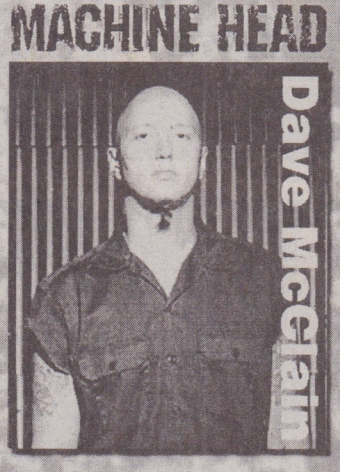
MIDWEST METAL

Issue #28
Never Say Die
2006





Sons of Otis ☠ Deceased
Kataklysm ☠ Demiricous
And More!

1 28016 69167 5

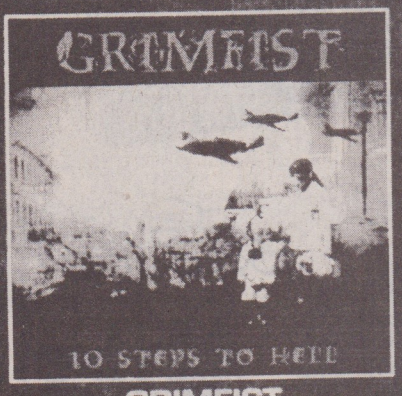
Complete Domination

DARK FUNERAL
Attera Totus Sanctus

"Deeper and more personal than previous efforts... all hail Dark Funeral's descent from hell!" - Metal Maniacs

1349
Hellfire

"Norwegian black metal force to be reckoned with.. even sicker & more merciless than its predecessor." - Decibel



GRIMFIST
10 Steps to Hell

KHOLD
Krek

DESTRUCTION
Inventor of Evil

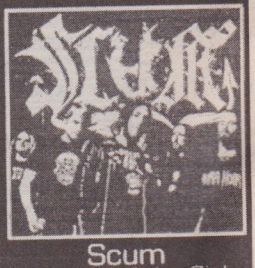
Also available from Candlelight USA

Centinex
World Declension

Bronx Casket Co
Hellectric

Blut Aus Nord
The Work Which Transforms God

Grand Magus
Wolf's Return



Scum
Gospels of the Sick

www.candlelightrecordsusa.com

Welcome to **Midwest Metal Magazine** Issue #28! It's almost surreal to be writing another introduction to M.M after a two year break and there's so much I want to say but at the same time I'd rather not say a thing. But this would be pointless if I didn't say something right? So I suppose we'll pick up where we left off...Issue #27 was released back in January of 2004 and since then my life has changed so fucking much, it's almost crazy to compare! So not only am I "happier" than I've ever been at any point in my life, I'm also more realistic. MM used to be my "life". It was all I cared about for so fucking long and I'd make myself sick over "pointless" things that once meant the world to me. It took some time to admit that this is just my hobby and my existence didn't have to involve releasing magazines or attending every show etc. Some people play golf, some fish or whatever, I choose to write about Heavy Metal and I love it! These past two years have been eye openers as far as what is really important to me and I'm very thankful for my experiences. No matter what goes on in my life the ups, the downs and the in-betweens my music has never let me down and for that I am, again, thankful. Issue #28 is my returning the "favor" to the soundtrack of my life. Nothing more, nothing less so don't look too deep into it, just enjoy. While on the subject of making myself sick, I still have many plans for our website in the future so I really hope to have **www.midwestmetalmagazine.com** become the viable outlet it has the potential to be. A quick thanks and hello to the following for their support: Everyone who has sent things in for review, Loana @ Nuclear Blast, Jensen, Rikki and Maria @ Adrenaline PR [much respect to the old school publicists], Greg Southern Lord, Liz & Dave Earsplit, Chipster PR, Dominick/Beyond The Limit, Mark/Metal Haven, Scott Davidson/Rebel Radio, Rodney and the CMF, Sean Doomed Nation, Ali, Art and the crew, Mr. Mike O'Brien for going above and beyond in the name of Metal and friendship, thank you! Robert Flynn and family, Adam, Phil and the MH crew, Frank and Adriana, Dave and Kathy Brian "Hollywood" Burdue for years of friendship, Mike Parker for his web help, Bill Hahn (thank you, seriously). Liz Indy, Kari, Rich and the boys and the regulars at the Ellis' Pub! Chris Kain & family. And to my own extended family who will not read this-nothing but the best to each of you and your families. My father Tom Trakas Sr. for everything past, present and future. My work "family" @ JEI, Mike and Metal Wayne, Mauricio Araniva for never giving up on the mighty Midwest. This issue dedicated to the fallen Metal brothers who left us in 2004/2005 your music lives on forever! It's all getting cloudy right now so I'm bound to forget a many people that deserve thanks. So all I can say is don't be offended if you're not here. Finally, I would like to thank my best friend/wife/soul-mate Andrea for her unwavering support for over 16 years. Through the best and the worst of times you have never left my side. To King Maxwel and Queen Lilly you two are my blood, my strength, my pride, my joy and my life. I love you all and I live for each and every day we have as a family together.

Midwest Metal Magazine
P.O. Box 612
Downers Grove, IL. 60516 U.S.A.
E: midwestmetal@comcast.net
www.midwestmetalmagazine.com
www.myspace.com/midwestmetal
Staff: Tom T. Vader, Editor
Writers: Mauricio Araniva, Strickland, Art Baumann
Cover Concept: Tom Vader
Execution: Brian Hilmers for **brianhilmers.com**

Chicago
Metal
Factory
CMF
www.theCMF.com
JOIN THE CHICAGO METAL FACTORY
FIND OUT ABOUT UPCOMING SHOWS & EVENTS,
NEW RELEASES & CLUB NIGHTS
IT'S FREE
CMF METAL WEDNESDAYS
UPSTAIRS @ LIAR'S CLUB
1665 W. Fullerton Ave. in Chicago
FREE doors @ 9, CMF UPSTAIRS @ 10
$1 PBR $2 JAMESON SHOTS
CMF METAL SUNDAYS
@ EXIT 1315 W. North Ave. in Chicago
doors @ 9 PM DJ's 10 - 4, 21 & over FREE
$2PBR $3 Effen Vodka drinks
www.theCMF.com

Photo Credits:
Demiricous: Carina Mastrocola, *www.defyunlearn.com*
Bill Ward: Robert Ellis, *billward.com*, Bob Gruen/Starfile
King Fowley Live: Johnny Vomit
Dew-Scented: *www.dew-scented.de*
As I Lay Dying: Dirt Junior *www.dirtjunior.com*
Obituary/Dave McClain/Sons of Otis live: Tom Trakas

Picking The Brain

Welcome back Pickers...Issue #28's subject is **Deceased** Vocalist and Lifer King Fowley. King also sings in October 31 and runs a label and distro, the man lives Heavy Metal. The new Deceased album, 'As The Weird Travel On' was recently released on Thrash Corner Records, their first studio release for the label. Always a great interview subject I thought I'd get some different answers out of King for a change.

FOOD

My food loves have changed a lot over last few years! These days I'm more into good chicken and rice. In the older days it was usually pizza, steak n' cheese and crap like that (laughing)! I try to eat good these days.

If Deceased made it to a huge level and you can have anything in the world on your back stage rider give me 5 things you'd ask for:

1: Alyssa Milano 2: Good Hot Wings 3: A juke box with late 70's radio rock in it. 4: A Green Machine Big Wheel 5: Gwen Stefani singing back-up's for us!!

DRINK

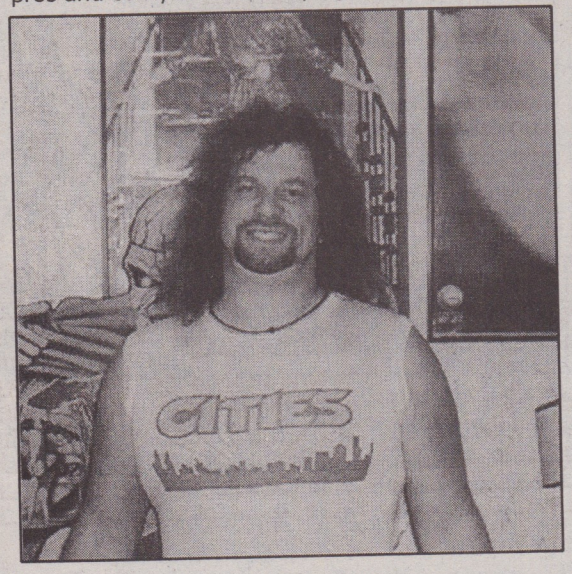
I'd say milk is my favorite drink! Skim Milk or a nice glass of cold water with lemon. I don't do alcohol anymore so none there. When I did drink alcohol it was Captain Morgan and 151 as my favorites!

DRUGS

I've not done drugs since 1987. Fuck drugs, drugs are lame as fuck!

Should Marijuana be legal? Yes or No, do you think we'll ever see it legalized and if so will it free up the cops-n-courts to bust actual criminals?

I think drugs are stupid and legalizing it has it's pros and cons, as does keeping it illegal. People really need to start living life without all the bullshit "extras".



MUSIC

This is my life! I love so much music and so many different styles...I get so much music all the time!

What was the last album you bought?

Last album I bought was Kansas 'Song for America' on CD with bonus tracks. I love too much music to list! I will tell you my all-time favorite album is Uriah Heep ' Abominog.'

SEX

I only like dirty, nasty over the top shit. No 'love-making' bullshit. It's got to be vicious and totally intense!

LOVE

My family, my real friends and good music! That is my real loves!

HATE

I hate ego trips, phony musicians, rap, pussies who talk a lot of shit but never say it to my face!

WORK

I do my distro and record label and it gets me by! I like working my own hours and it gives me time to play shows!

What's been your favorite and least favorite job you've had?

My favorite is doing my distro and label, it's the best job I've ever had. I'm my own boss, no complaints. The worst...that was doing landscaping! The wheelbarrow tire was always flat!!

www.upthetombstones.com

Germany's ***Dew Scented*** *are what's right about Thrash Metal in 2006. With none of the lame retro-ism's in both sound and image, these guys simply deliver the goods on record and live. Their latest* 'Issue VI' *is their sixth full length I spoke with Vocalist Leif Jensen shortly after the bands devastating set at Joe's in Chicago November 9th, 2005 supporting Vader and Decapitated.*

Midwest Metal: You just finished a European tour supporting Nevermore...how did that go?

Leif Jensen: Very, very well. Nevermore is probably one of the best bands to support as they're amazing as both people as well as musicians. Playing with them was a challenge to us as it was sort of "out of the box" as we usually play with more extreme Death or Black Metal bands, but we had a great time the crowds were very receptive to us, we enjoyed the whole tour.

I'm sure it was refreshing to you to play to some fresh ears so-to-speak.

Definitely! I'm sure every night there were at least 50% of the people who had never heard our music and that was a good thing that was the intention of the tour.

As far as your presence in the US, next year (2006) will mark 10 years of the band releasing albums. For most though you still seem like a "new band" in the States...

Also next year will be the fourth year of us releasing albums in the States. It's weird when people say to us "you've been around for 12 years, you've released six records", that's almost surreal to us because the real action has just started. So yeah it seems like a long process but it's been a very natural one which is good. It's not like we were constantly in the "spotlight" where we any felt pressure, any progression was for us. For a long time all we did was play shows and took a hands on, do it yourself approach which was good for us to learn how things work...

You have to. Too many bands think once they sign with a label they're done promoting.

I agree man, it's like you have to learn how to stand on your own two feet before you ask someone for a ride!

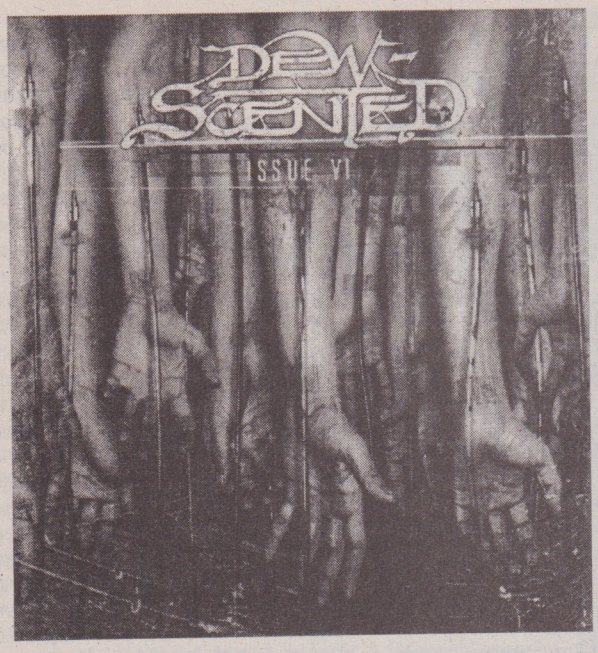
Speaking of labels, for a German band you guys have been signed to both SPV and your current home Nuclear Blast. Not too shabby if I do say so myself, huh?

Well with SPV, yeah they were a big company and at the time didn't know how to handle us. There were a few good people there but their main priorities then were Motorhead, Saxon, Doro so how does a young extreme band fit into that? We then moved onto Grind Syndicate Media, back to a one person label who took very good care of us and let us progress. Eventually Nuclear Blast started paying attention to us and we've been with them for awhile now. It's funny as we're no where near their biggest band, we may even be their smallest band but they like the band. They understand us and have given us all the support we've needed. We actually just re-signed with them last week for a few more records. The US office has been doing great as well and I think this tour is the start of a lot of doors to open, hopefully. This tour was the perfect opportunity for us and it's great to tour with Vader again.

How did the songwriting come together for 'Issue VI'?

Well when it comes to songwriting, we're a band that is very difficult to get in the mood of writing. We'd much rather be playing live. So we'll decide to not book any shows for a two or three week period so we know we'll have to sit down and just write.

This brings up a question I have about when (2003's) 'Impact' came out. For some reason I thought of Dew Scented as a band that would maybe try to "evolve" or "expand" on the foundation of your sound. But it didn't happen and it took me a little to accept the band as a



I don't know about them, but we've always tried to remain realistic no matter what the situation you know? Good or bad, just we've always known it's not going to pay the bills. Trust me we've lost members because of that, families and jobs. It's too bad because we consider each other friends and yeah we're doing this for the fun of it, but we're totally serious, we just have a good time with it.

Slayer type of band. You'll always be, you.

I can see where you're coming from. 'Impact' was a weird record for us, it was a very extreme record. That album was supposed to be the fastest, heaviest as it gets album from us. So after that we said we're going to do a record that is a little more diverse. Something that has a little bit of melody, a little more groove and a little more of the technical edge. 'Impact' yeah, it was pretty much steamrolling all the way through...

So it'd be your 'Reign In Blood' without saying that.

Yeah, in a way...(laughing) without me saying that...(laughing) so we then wanted to write our 'Divine Intervention'! So we planned on doing a different type of album and then I get people coming up to me saying they don't hear much difference at all!

We glanced over it earlier, but did you ever think you'd last 12 plus years as a band? We could talk for another two hours about all the bands that have broken up or changed and now suck.

I did another interview earlier and a question was "what has been the biggest challenge for the band?" And I had to say "just sticking around" really, that's been the hardest.

Remember when The Crown broke up and they released that grim, but totally true statement about touring and the lack of money etc. Do you think they just expected too much or didn't know about the umbrella that is Extreme Music.

No question about it, you've got to love it.

Exactly, that's been one of the main problems with music being so extreme. It will never commercially put us in the situation where we can pay the bills. So as long as you're organized and pick the right times to take off for an album or tour it's not a problem.

When do you see writing for the 7th album happening?

We probably will start writing sometime in March 2006 as we have another European tour coming up with Cryptopsy and Grave, that's in February. We'll probably take a break in the Summer to do festivals and have something together by the end of the year.

I'm going to mention 5 bands, say whatever you want about them. Some appear in this same issue...Kreator

Very good band, very good people, like their attitude but they live in the next town from me so I have to be careful of what I say (laughing)! I do see Mille in town from time to time, very cool guy.

Napalm Death

They're still one of the most extreme bands ever, just super good people, great attitude. Always a real pleasure to see them...I'm good friends with them too, maybe you should give me a band I hate (laughing)!

Obituary

I'm a huge fan of 'Slowly We Rot'! And while that's so long ago I've always respected them. They've always been unique and are a very good live band...that'd be a good band for us to tour with, hopefully someday. The new album is OK, it's exactly what they should've done, it sounds so jammed out I like it. But the reason I say it's only "OK" is it just doesn't get back that raw feeling of 'Slowly...' but nothing ever will, will it?

Machine Head

I've never been a big fan, until the new album ['Through the Ashes of Empires'] it took me completely by surprise. Everyone used to listen to 'Burn My Eyes' back then, which is why I couldn't get into it you know? I've always been the kind of fan if everybody tells me something is amazing I'm very skeptical. So I sort of missed that record. It wasn't until years later I discovered it to be very good. But that new album, it got me. There is so much Bay Area in that record, it's amazing, I think Phil Demmel coming back to play probably brought back a lot of the old chemistry back. I'm a huge Vio-Lence fan, so I was happy to see that happen.

Last band...Dew Scented

A bunch of losers with a weird band name, crazy ass German motherfuckers who should know better!

www.dew-scented.de

OBITUARY

John Tardy is an Extreme Metal legend. His work on seminal Death Metal albums such as 'Slowly We Rot', 'Cause Of Death and 'The End Complete' will go down in history as some of the finest ever growled onto tape. Their story is well known, sometimes they're doing things some times they're not. They never broke up they just relaxed. So after an extended relax session Obituary is back! **'Frozen In Time'** ***is the name of the new album and if you haven't heard it you're missing out on some quality Metal. I spoke to John in late October 2005. Many thanks to the man himself for taking the time.***

Midwest Metal: Let's jump into it by recapping this US tour you guys just finished (Sept/Oct 2005) which was the first extended batch of US dates you've done in quite some time.

John Tardy: Yeah it really was. We'd done a few shows here and there but yeah this was the longest stretch of dates we've done. We were out with Napalm Death and we've toured with them in the past and they're really good friends of ours so we knew right off the bat we'd be having a great time. We met the Dead to Fall guys for the first time and they turned out to be really cool guys as well and I thought the tour went great. We had a lot of good shows, a lot of good crowds and everything was capped off with a really, really good show here at home which was great to see.

I've got to say I was just blown away at the Chicago show. I was blown away by the band as well as the crowd.

Chicago was definitely one of the best shows for sure.

What were your expectations on doing this first run of dates? I know you had to be looking forward to getting out and about again, but were there any hesitations, even business wise?

I was actually really excited to get out there and play. With all the shows we've done in Europe the interviewers always ask how's the scene in the states and I couldn't really answer, you know? I had no idea (laughing)! We knew there were a lot of other bands out touring at the same time we were out because in Atlanta there was like three or four other shows happening the same night as ours, but overall no complaints.

How's the feedback been from the fans as well as the press for 'Frozen In Time'?

Well the good thing is I've actually heard very little negative stuff about it. Most people seem surprised that we put out a classic sounding album that sounds just like us, you know no bells, no whistles but what we normally do. I guess there's a lot of bands, new and old alike that put some different types of things into their sound or even older bands that have gotten back together doing some good stuff but not all good you know? But maybe it's just us but a lot of people seem to be really, really enjoying the new record and that makes us feel good.

I think I described it like a friend you haven't seen for a while coming to the door. You know him, you know what he's all about and you can't wait to just hang out.

That's a good way to say it (laughing)! You know the songs were written and when we started recording them and listening back to them, we thought we were going to self title the album. It sounded just like what we'd done in the past plus it's our last album for Roadrunner and we were set on it for a while. When we got the artwork from Andreas Marschall we looked at it and in one of the lyrics I say "frozen in time" everything just clicked and seemed to fit really well.

That seemed pretty painless, was the rest of it as easy?

You know everything seemed to go so well with this album, we did not struggle with anything. We wrote songs faster than we ever have before and the whole process was just so damn fun and easy going, I think it shows in the final product.

Now as far as business writing and recording, touring etc. Is Obituary back in it for good or are you guys testing the marketplace so-to-speak?

We've got everyone into this with two feet, everybody's put their side

projects as well as jobs on the back burner and we dug into this thing. We had a very busy Summer, man those festivals nearly killed us...there was a show we did in Finland. I flew to Finland, I was there for 20 hours, played a show then came home! Things like that man, we'd play a festival get off stage at 2 AM and then get woken up at 6 AM drive to the airport, fly, then take a six hour van ride, show up, play and then do it all over again for four shows in a row then come home. It was brutal! The US tour we just did was awesome dude, we had our bus and the schedule in front of us and that was killer. But we did it, the shows there were great but Summer in Europe there's just way too many bands, way too much stuff going on!

The US tour was mostly East Coast and the Mid-West, are you going to do the rest of the country as well?

Right now we've got some European dates in January which is basically all of Europe. We need to get to Japan and Australia for sure and then we'd like to do something on the West Coast, start at home and go through Texas and up through California and to Seattle, Portland and into Canada. But it'll happen, we're in no real hurry to kill ourselves trying to get these things done ASAP you know? It'll happen though.

Obituary always seemed to be one of those bands that only toured when everything else was in place. Meaning bills at home were set for a bit, jobs were steady so you'd have a job when you got home so on and so on.

Yeah I had a good job and I was lucky that they'd let me come and go and they did that for a long time, we got along really well. When we first started out we'd do an album and tour every year and then it turned into two or three years in between, 'Back From The Dead' took us like four years and 'Frozen In Time' took longer than that. But if we're ready to do it and by "it" I mean an album or a tour, we set it up and do it we don't sit around and think it's been x amount of time, don't know if that's good or bad, but that's how we do it. Even after we did finished up the touring for the 'Back From The Dead' album we just planned on taking a break, it wasn't supposed to be a seven year break, but that's just how it turned out. We all still talked and even jammed from time to time but it wasn't like people were breaking down our doors asking us to do stuff so we just laid low for a while.

Does taking a break like that make your lust for Obituary even stronger when you do re-group? Not that you don't love it when you're doing the band, but just looking at it from a different perspective?

Well I think it's the same with anything you enjoy. I mean if you like waterskiing, if you do it every single day eventually it's not going to be as fun as it is when you can only get out every other weekend, you know? When you get out there you're really going to rip it up!

As far as business goes, you guys seem to have a much more hands on approach. How's that been?

I have never handled this much business in the bands entire career! Frank, Donald and myself have been totally hands on. Frank talks to a lot of the promoters and sets up shows, Donald handles a lot of the production end and even advancing shows on this last tour and I've been dealing with the merchandise and the website end of things. So yeah we've been really hands on and it's been great, especially for me because I get to see exactly what's going on and what to expect and it's easier to plan when you know what's up.

I'm sure it makes things cooler between the band too, nothing is hidden or a surprise.

Yeah, exactly. In the past Trevor who's a really bright dude, but also a very laid back dude was doing most of it and he'd set up a lot of shows. We'd get to a gig and find out we're not really making any money and we'd traveled all this way and certain things just didn't make sense to keep em running like that. But now we've got our priorities straight, we tell people our price and we take all kinds of things into consideration, there's five of us, there's our crew so we know what we're worth and we're not out there asking for a ridiculous amount or anything, but we need to make sure everything is covered.

Stupid question maybe, but...do you think you guys would've had the same initial impact you had if you would have kept the name Xecutioner?

Man...well first off, we never even planned on doing a record to begin with. When we started playing Metal Xecutioner was a cool Metal sounding name we had while we were writing these songs that would become 'Slowly We Rot' so it was cool for us you know? All of a sudden Roadrunner is in the picture and they were like "we want you to do a record" and then we all thought we had to come up with a better name because we were sure there were probably about four thousand other bands with the name Executioner. So it wasn't something we really thought about too much.

It's just that, well an obituary is something everyone knows about, but to a lot of people it instantly brings you guys, that's very cool.

Yeah I agree. You know when we first started it wasn't even like we were that band to go out and look for gigs to play, we weren't trying to do demo tapes and all that stuff. We did do a 7" but even then it was just something for us to do, it wasn't like we thought we should do bunch of copies and send them to record companies, we didn't even send one! We always just did what we do and let things come to us, Roadrunner came to us, tours now come to us and we just do what we've always done. And while it's probably a lot of luck but things usually work out pretty good. In fact I'd say we were luckiest when the five of us got

together to jam and we ended up developing a sound of our own and that's the most important thing for any band. Most young bands get together and usually sound like other bands and there's not too many of them that go anywhere sounding like everyone else. A band like Metallica always had their own sound, the second someone put an album by them on, you knew who it was.

When you're touring and someone gives you a demo to check out, John could you imagine starting from square one in 2005?

(laughing)

There's this thing called the internet that seems to stand in a lot of these bands' way.

Man, the internet can be good for the bigger bands who can afford to put out a DVD with their albums or really fancy packaging to make kids want to go out and actually buy the album. But to the young or small band, the second someone has a copy, either one they bought or downloaded it's all over. I know our album was downloadable months before it was in the stores, and the labels are like "oh don't worry about it, the more it's out there the better." I just don't get that, I don't buy it for a second. I remember when Napster and whatever first came out I remember how much stuff I downloaded for free...nowadays it's just way too fucking easy and you can get all the artwork and packaging, fuck. There's no way you can sit there and tell me that doesn't hurt album sales. For a young band just starting out and if they're trying to make a little bit of money and get into it full time it's got to be impossible. On the flip side if you're a new band and all you want to do is get your music and name out there it's the best way, but as far as selling product, forget about it. Back in the day if you didn't go out and buy the cassette or whatever all you'd have is some shitty sounding copy of an album, now people burn an exact duplicate and it sounds just as good.

Along the same lines do you notice a change from the old guard fans, the die-hards that HAD to have the album, the ones that soak in the cover, the photos, the credits etc.

Yeah that's another somewhat depressing thing. We have this beautiful piece of art that Andreas sent us, it's a nice huge painting and the whole time he's creating it we're focused on the most minute details right? Well when it's all said and done the thing will be 6"x6" and that's it! No one will even be able to see what we're worried about anyway! But I can't say I actually miss records, there's no comparison but I miss the artwork, the big ol Molly Hatchet album covers and picture discs you know?

What's the coolest or rarest Obituary related thing you've found on Ebay?

I usually don't find anything ultra rare or anything, I do see a lot of funny looking bootlegs and bootleg t-shirts and it's like, "damn, where'd they get that!" But the interesting thing would be to find one of the Xecutioner 45's that we were just talking about. It'd be cool as hell to find because no one in the band even has one anymore!

No shit?

Seriously, I get kids emailing me all the time asking me where they could find one and all I can say is "good luck!" We don't even have a recording of it, Morrisound lost the tape we recorded it on so they're lost in space, which maybe isn't the worst thing in the world (laughing) we recorded that back when we were in like tenth or eleventh grade! Definitely pretty comical!

I'd like to jump in the time machine for a second and have you comment on two "historic" tours Obituary were a part of. First one would be the Complete Control Tour with Malevolent Creation and Agnostic Front.

Oh yeah! Well the Malevolent dudes were from Florida too, so we knew them and got along great with them but a lot of people didn't know about us and Agnostic Front. People were telling us we shouldn't tour with them, we'd have problems this and that you know? And we did the tour and to this day Tom, when we see any of the AF guys it's like we're still the best of friends. I, personally, thought it made for an even better night because I know I would rather see something a little different than just seeing three Death Metal bands in a row. Having Agnostic Front in between Malevolent and us made for a nice break and it wasn't like they were some wimpy band, they kicked ass. We also made a lot of new fans on that tour with the AF fans who had never heard or seen us before, they were able to relate to us because it wasn't like we were straight blasting the whole time, you definitely could get the foot tapping to **Obituary**.

Another one would be the infamous S.O.S. Tour (Sepultura, Obituary and Sadus).

(Laughing) Now that's one that would be nice to do again, to this day that was one of my favorite tours we ever did! I don't know man, it seems like every band we go on the road with we end up becoming really good friends with 'em. But Sepultura, man.... I met Max on his first trip to the United States, he knew very little English you know? He came to Morrisound to mix with Scott Burns and he stayed at my house during that time. That's how I met him and we instantly... I remember getting him stoned out of his mind then taking him to some motocross races, some Monster Truck races (laughing)! Man, he was just tripping out, first time in America seeing some really crazy shit. But to go against what I just said about not wanting to see three heavy bands, but those three bands, all three of us were so different. Even though we were all very heavy, it was just three totally different bands, man that was an extremely good tour.

Is it ever weird when you see Max nowadays? I know you did a festival recently with Soulfly...it just seems like he's taken on this almost "iconic" persona for the newer generation. Does it ever blow you away that he's still here and is "bigger than ever".

Well Max is certainly Max...originality has a lot to do with that. What he does with Soulfly versus Sepultura it's just him,

I just as much as anybody else would love nothing more to see those guys get back together even if it wasn't for the music, just to see those two brothers talking again. That's just a sad point right there. But we saw him at a fest, I saw his bus there and it was one of those shows we just flew into and rode up in a van. So the first thing I did when I got there was go bang on his bus and had Gloria come answer the door. I got to go and hang out with Max for a while and obviously he keeps busy so we don't see each other too often, but it was cool to see him.

Let's finish it off with a run down of the Obituary catalog:

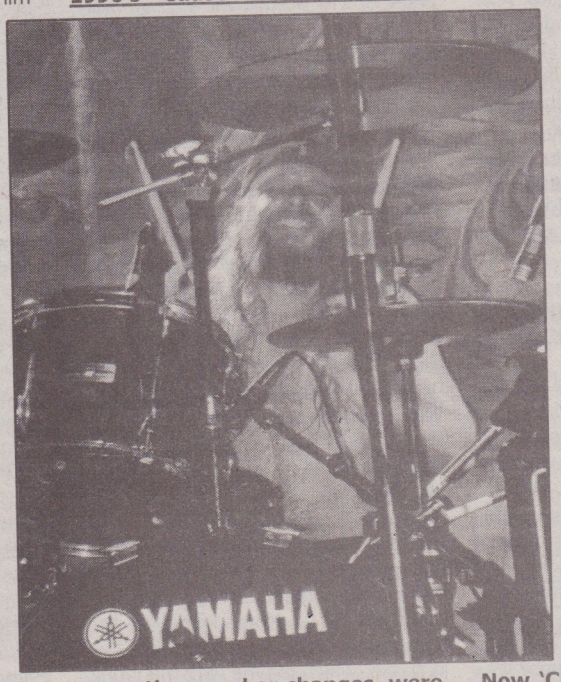
1989's 'Slowly We Rot' No matter what you guys do, it always comes back to 'Slowly We Rot'

(laughing) If you look at most bands that are out there, even a band like Metallica... 'Kill Em All'...Yeah 'Master Of Puppets' kicks ass, but it always goes back to 'Kill Em All'. Maybe it's because it's the first time people heard you, they put that on and it's their first impression, that's what's going to stick in their minds. Which is great if you think about it the fact that it's remembered so well is very cool. That album was done on eight tracks at the old Morrisound by Scott Burns who had never mixed an album before in his life. Huge 2" reels and working with Scott watching him cut and splice actual tape, everything was flown in backwards and seemed like so much work just tedious hours and hours of messing with that stupid tape! Now we have someone like Mark Prator and Pro-Tools it's totally changed as far as that aspect...but anyway back to 'Slowly...' if I ever sit back and listen to it it's just like anyone of our albums, it's a piece of time of your life and I can look back at it that way.

Were you intimidated going in to record at a studio with Scott?

What happened was got hooked up with an engineer named Rick Miller, Scott was just emptying trash cans at the time. As we were setting up and getting sounds Rick had a family emergency and had to leave so Morrisound asked Scott if he'd like to give it a try. Scott knew some stuff behind the board but this was the first album he worked on so he got thrown in the fire like us! But we were having so much fun it didn't matter plus we were doing six songs we didn't know this was going to be an album as this was before Roadrunner. So we didn't have any pressure on us at all it wasn't until we got signed that we went back in to record four more songs to complete the album.

1990's 'Cause Of Death' there were the member changes, were there a lot of disagreements at this time?



No, not really yeah we had James Murphy come in to do solos but Big Al still wrote half of that album but he was going though some stuff at the time, got married had a kid and then got divorced so it was best for him to take care of it. We always knew he'd be back, so we got some solos done on the album, Scott Burns knew James Murphy. He did them on the album and then toured with us in support of the album and that was that. 'Cause of Death' was a cool album for us, it was the first time we tried linking all of the songs together and had intros for all the songs which for back then was kind of cool. I loved the artwork, it was so unmistakable.

I also have to add, you know how some bands cover a song and it pretty much becomes "their song" , you guys could still be playing 'Circle of the Tyrants' live and people would love it.

(laughing) Yeah, I'm sure it'd go over bigger in Europe as I don't know how many kids in the US know who [Celtic] Frost is. It goes back to the garage...from the day Trevor went and bought a guitar, before he even knew how to play back when Donald was in band with just a snare...after he got a kit from day one all we did was try to write our own stuff, mostly because we weren't good enough to try and learn somebody else's stuff. But that's what we liked doing, no matter how stupid it was at least it was ours. But when we got better at our instruments as far as cover songs, 'Circle Of The Tyrants' and I think another Frost tune, a Venom song amd I'm sure a Metallica song.

The hit of the album has to be "Chopped In Half". There's one song that can be about nothing else, but being chopped in half is it the quintessential Death Metal anthem?

(laughing) One of the things I kinda like about most of our song titles is they're somewhat original or totally silly or whatever. But yeah, there's nothing really intricate about most of the titles too. But "Chopped In Half" definitely say's it all right then and there. When the song was written and the rhythm began it was the first thing out of my mouth.

Now 'Cause of Death' totally set you guys up for 'The End Complete' which was released in 1992. I think 'TEC' was also one of the first Death Metal albums to be heavily supported by a video which you guys had for the title track.

Yeah, people still ask about that video, they talk about that tree! But it was the first video we did, I'm not the biggest fan of doing videos, but you do what you've got to do. We shot in this field which was really just a cow pasture and there was this huge dead oak tree on this guys land. We got permission to shoot the video there but these farmers had a bunch of friends who kept an eye on their place and they're watching a bunch of long hairs setting up and we've got these flames shooting into the sky and they all come after us yelling and screaming and we had to explain everything, [it was] funny as hell.

This album struck a nerve with people as it was the first Obituary album for a lot of people, so that tends to make it a favorite for them...

Yeah I'd have to agree with you I hear a lot of people who always rave about 'The End Complete'. And that's the goal, to have a lot of killer albums, not one or two and then a few crap ones it's almost like what's the point? It defeats the purpose.

In 1994 you released 'World Demise' which was definitely an

album the band "matured" a little on. There was some different sounds going on under the classic Obituary crunch.

Some people have said that the album isn't as heavy as some of the other albums and I'll listen to it, even the title track and that's fucking heavy the drums are heavy as hell. I guess a different perspective is also Roadrunner didn't do much with that album, they didn't do much with a lot of our albums, but they really laid back and did zero with 'World Demise'. Granted I don't even remember how much touring we did for the album and that hurts too.

In 1997 after a three year wait came 'Back From The Dead'.

Once again that was a heavy album and once again we took some time doing it, not for any reason in particular, but we just wrote it when we were ready to.

Here's a question. At any point of the bands career, did you ever think you'd be able to survive off of the music? Did you ever think "wow this record sold this many copies, a few more like this and I can quit my day job?"

No.

Really?

I mean you'd get to points in the career or whatever where you're getting, like a ton of attention or some shows or tours that do pretty good...but seriously I think I always expected a little more than probably what we did actually achieve. But again, I'll say we never really sought any of this out so anything that came our way was, for the most part, more than we ever thought of to begin with.

So essentially with that mind set, it was all a gift.

(laughing) It was all one big party, man. But back to 'Back From...' it's an album I still enjoy, I loved the production and with the break in between it gave everyone a fresh ear as well.

You guys took some heat for the last song on the album, "Bullituary"

Yeah...well, whatever (laughing). That right there, it wasn't something we planned on doing from the start, we were in the studio and the Bully Boys are friends of Frank and they were hanging with us and one night it just happened. It would've been even stupider *not* to have put it on the album even if one person liked it...if you don't like it, just go past the song.

1997 was also the year you guys returned to play the Milwaukee Metalfest with S.O.D. and Exodus

Yeah, that was the year we had the pyro! I remember we were setting up and they saw the pyro and they said "you can't use that" and we're like "oh, come on we know what we're doing, don't worry". But if you remember, everything we had went off at once, it supposed to be four blasts and it turned into one massive bomb during "Slowly We Rot". It blew the fuck out of D.T.'s bass drums because they expanded so much when it went off. There was a piece of the drum riser that was like 3' x about 3" and it flew over the crowd and landed on the soundboard, I still have that! It's nice to be able to laugh about that now.

In 1998 the live album 'Dead' is released. Your thoughts?

Yeah...as it turned out it was another thing Trevor did for us (laughing) and we didn't even know we were recording it until a few days before. Plus he picked the 23rd show of a 23 date tour which is cool for a guitarist because his guitar sounds just as good on the 23rd date as the first you know? I do think it came out good though, there were no overdubs I think the only thing we did was add some crowd noise. It was a small club in Boston and we had very little crowd mics so that was it, but for the last show of a tour it was good. Usually the last show of a tour you're partying pretty good and mentally you're already on your way home so knowing that it's definitely a good representation of the band.

Now the 'Anthology' that came out in 2001 was done with no input from the band. So I'm sure it's not something you look at in a good light, but from a fan's perspective, how do you see that release?

I don't know...I guess it's cool on one hand because it has our songs on it, but it's almost like I don' t think a release like that should be out until we're totally done recording and we've called it a day. Then after a few years something like that should surface. But I don't know how I feel about it, I do know if we had our say we would've picked different songs for it. So there you go, as far as fans I'm sure they would've liked to know what our favorite tracks are, not what the record company liked.

If they hadn't released the 'Anthology' they would've done a 'Best Of Obituary' like they did with Deicide, Malevolent etc.

And that's classic Roadrunner. Re-mix, re-master, gold disc, black disc whatever they can do to re-sell it.

How do you think you'll look back on 'Frozen In Time'?

I personally love the record. I think it's the best produced album we've ever done. I think it's the heaviest thing we've ever done, man, we played seven songs off the new album on this tour. There's something about this material, there were people who weren't totally familiar with the album who just got into it instantly. I know when I see a band I'm usually there for the old stuff, but I think this new stuff, a song like "Stand Alone" just rolls and sounds so good live. Once again, Donald and I spent so much time with Mark Prator producing the record ourselves which was nice and I just think it's really heavy. **www.obituary.cc**

Dave McClain of
MACHINE HEAD

*I think it's safe to say **Dave McClain** is one of the most underrated sticksmen in the world of Metal. His drumming on albums like 'The More Things Change', 'Through the Ashes of Empires' and 'Independent' speak louder than my words. His work is also "showcased" in the recently released concert film* 'Elegies', *the first DVD release from his band of ten years **Machine Head**. I'd like to think once people watch the DVD they'll realize what they've been missing out on. Not only from a drumming stand point but the band itself. In this interview we talk about the Dave's early days in Texas and then to Phoenix where he would join Sacred Reich and finally his road to the Bay Area and the trip that's been. Enjoy.*

Midwest Metal: When did the music bug bite? When does the music bug turn into the Metal bug?

Dave McClain: Well in the beginning it was KISS. KISS is what got me into drumming to begin with, so I'd have to say they were my introduction to Metal. For about two years KISS was the only band I listened to and it got to the point where my dad would take me to the mall and say "go to the record store and buy something, anything but KISS" and I'd be like "dammit". Even though I had every album, it didn't matter. So the first "real" Metal band I got into was Judas Priest. I had a neighbor who not only had a drum kit but he also had a copy of 'Stained Class' and this was right about the time 'Hell Bent For Leather' came out. So for the first few years I drummed it was to Priest and KISS, Les Binks was the man for sure. So when 'Point of Entry' came out, back in San Antonio there was a radio station, it's still there, but back then we had this station called Kiss and the DJ's name was Joe Anthony and this guy would play the most underground stuff! He'd play Priest and Rush and bands like that, but one night I remember him saying he was going to play a new band from England called Iron Maiden and I think he played "Transylvania" and "Phantom of the Opera" and we used to listen to his show, man, it was like our bible! So when Maiden came on it was like "Fuck", you know? So Joe Anthony would be playing Angel Witch, Tygers of Pan Tang all the NWOBHM stuff. My friend and I were in a band at the time, it was a cover band playing Priest and Riot tunes and stuff and we put out an ad in a paper looking for people into the NWOBHM bands and the next thing you know we had a band.

So did Slayer [S.A.] come from that?

That was Slayer. Actually when we first started the name of the band was Dragon Slayer (laughing)...

Well that's even better than just Slayer! Plus think about it, you could've had that name all to yourselves!

So we shortened it to just Slayer.

With no idea of the California band...

No idea at all. We were just kids with a kick ass name and we started writing tunes, we had no idea about the music business let alone another band called Slayer. It was funny though, now, I mean a lot of magazines ended up reviewing both Slayer albums at the same time ("Show No Mercy" and "Prepare To Die") but as far as us, we were blown away our EP made it onto like the Kerrang! charts. I mean we made it to the same magazine as Iron Maiden!

From that point on, 83/84 you basically made music and drums your life. Did you just go from band to band?

Yeah, pretty much. It was like school? That was out as I dropped out and moved to LA...

What year was this?

This was in, 1986. That's when I met Ross Robinson and did some bands with him over the next few years. A friend of mine who lived in LA named Troy (Gregory) ended up getting a gig with Flotsam and Jetsam and he was the one who told me about Sacred Reich needing a drummer. I was totally into them, they were one of my favorite Metal bands at the time and I ended up talking to Phil Rind and getting a song list from him, flew out to Arizona to audition and joined them. The first tour I did with SR was with Sepultura who was managed by Gloria as was SR. Then as you know Igor Cavalera and Borivoj Krigin were how I got in touch with **Machine Head**. But that was a cool time for sure, that was on the 'Arise' tour which was sick...we did that tour then we went out with Pantera on the 'Vulgar...' tour which was awesome.

So when you joined Sacred Reich you had to be saying to yourself "finally".

Yeah, totally...and even though I'd been playing for awhile in different bands and what not I was so driven to just playing music. It was all I could ever see myself doing for the rest of my life was play music. So to get that break...of course I know now that stuff like that is all about being in the right place at the right time but that was huge for me.

Now while you were in SR what were your thoughts on Machine Head? The first record had come out to a lot of press and word of mouth etc. Had you had any contact with the guys at a show or on the road?

No, not really. I heard the band through a Metal radio show in Phoenix who had played a few songs. I thought it was cool, definitely heavy, reminded me a little of Pantera and wasn't that far removed from some of the stuff Sacred Reich did, heaver than SR, but cool definitely. I didn't even know Robb [Flynn] was in **Machine Head** because I had known of Vio-Lence...but there wasn't like this huge buzz about MH in Phoenix at the time. I mean I knew they were coming through with Slayer but that's about it. By the time Borivoj called me up about auditioning, I had heard a lot more about them. At that time SR was in a weird position where we'd just lost our deal with Hollywood Records and signed to Metal Blade. Sacred Reich... it's no secret that they weren't the hardest working band in history, it was actually the opposite! Even when I first joined the band, before the Sepultura tour we'd only practiced a few times! I'd say to Phil, "Hey you wanna practice"? and he just said "Ah, you know the songs" so they were pretty notorious for being lazy (laughs)! So when I got the call from Robb I went and talked to the SR guys. I didn't tell them I had gotten a call, but I told them we needed to get serious and buckle down and I wanted to know what we were going to do. And the guys were like "yeah, yeah, yeah" you know? So I called Robb back and I told him I have to say no and that the SR guys were going to turn over a new leaf here and be a little more serious and he was like "OK". Three weeks, maybe a month had passed and there was nothing... no practice, no this, no that, no nothing and I was like "fuck this". I knew I had to take a chance and I called Robb back, again, and he was like "cool, whatever you know" (laughing). So I flew out to Oakland and tried out.

We're approaching 10 years here.

(laughing) Yeah it was the day after Christmas because they left me hanging for like two weeks! Which wasn't too stressful (laughing)!

So 10 years, man. You know though, to some people even though it's been 10 years people still see you as a "new" guy.

Yeah 10 years later and I'm still the "new guy".

Even funnier is how the World has taken to Phil [Demmel] like he's been there since day one yet Dave's the new guy!

I guess by new guy they just mean the youngest looking guy in the band (laughing)!

What do you remember about the audition? Did they give you a list of songs?

Well I had learned the entire 'Burn My Eyes' album so I think we just went track by track in order. Once we did that they had some riffs they'd been working on, one being the main riff in "Struck A Nerve" and the other was "The Frontlines". I think they wanted to see if I could play what they were hearing. So then we played through the songs again.

How confident were you once it was done?

I knew I did good, I mean I learned the whole album. One thing I picked up from the SR days was when a band loses it's drummer and it was a good drummer, they want to hear you play the stuff pretty much how it was recorded. They don't want someone coming in and adlibbing all over the place.

How important was it to come into the band on 'The More Things Change' which was and is a very percussive heavy album and leave your mark? You had to be stoked!

Totally! I think the band felt they had something to prove because the first album had done so well. But Robb and I worked a lot on the drum parts for the album and I think he wanted to prove people wrong about what could be done. I really think at the time, he wanted to prove to Chris (Kontos) that the band had gotten a killer drummer capable of doing some cool stuff.

How was your first tour with MH, the 97 Euro tour with Napalm Death in support. It was a headline tour and it had to be incredible. How did it compare to the tours you did with SR?

With SR we went to Europe with Sepultura and then went back by ourselves which was on a much smaller scale. On the **MH** tour we played some of the same places Sepultura played and a lot of bigger venues too.

Is there one memory that sticks out for you from that first tour?

I'd have to say playing and headlining the Astoria. That was almost a surreal moment because I'd always read about the place and being there and doing the show, it was like "yeah, I'm in the club" (laughing)!

Well from there the next thing you do with the band is Ozzfest 97, another mind blower!

I still remember getting the call from Robb and him saying "main stage, Ozzfest!" That was really cool as it was the first big one and we felt like this up-n-coming band and the bill was incredible with Pantera and Sabbath. It definitely worked out for us too, it got us the Pantera tour too. Phil was a big supporter during that time he'd watch us a lot and we were doing the "off-fest" dates and Phil would travel with Neurosis to those dates too. I remember I think it was in Oklahoma and he came up to us and said "mark my words, you'll be on the next Pantera tour" and I was like "cool!" (laughing).

You did a run with Corrosion of Conformity in the US, which even then was a weird bill. How was that for you?

Yeah it was weird for us too, at that time we were starting to blow up a little in the states and if that tour had happened a little sooner it would've been cool. But at that particular time we felt we could've easily been playing the same places by ourselves due to the amount of touring we did. It was just one after another after another but regardless we were just stoked to be out on the road.

During the touring for 'TMTC' things started to bubble with Logan Mader. Was it one particular thing that caused problems or what?

It was personality-wise...we were doing a headline run with Snot supporting and things there just started to surface. He was hanging out with Lynn [Strait] a lot and it all came to a head after the touring was done, we had a meeting and he just went off on people, man I can remember it like it was yesterday. We had done so much in support of the record and it all came down to one day you know? Logan had gotten a lot of press with the band, he was a killer guitarist had killer stage presence and I think he thought there was more out there for him to do etc.

After Logan is out you bring in Ahrue Luster...

Yeah we bring Ahrue in and the whole time he was there we're not only trying to gel as people, which were doing while we rehearse...It's not the same as gelling with someone while touring where you really get to know a lot about a person. So while we're doing that we're also trying to write a new record and again, 'TMTC' did well for us so there may have been a little pressure, at least inside to do better. 'TMTC' looking back can be seen as almost a 'Burn My Eyes' part II, not as great or whatever but we still got some shit for staying the same etc. So when it was time to do 'The Burning Red' there were a lot of conscious efforts to do things differently. From toning down the drum parts to making the songs themselves a little more basic and having Ross Robinson produce which was the first time we didn't use Colin Richardson so it was definitely going to be different. I know some people weren't happy that two of the songs had more of a hip-hop type feel so while it can be looked at like a departure, sometimes you have to do things like that. Looking back on the record though there some great stuff on there and some stuff that wasn't as focused but we did have new people around and we wanted to try some new things. At that point in the band and even at the record company everyone wanted to see things keep going up, bigger this and bigger that so we did have some songs that were catered to be on the radio but at the same time it wasn't like we were writing a bunch of ballads or something.

How do you look back on that period now six years later...

It's hard to say, if we had come out with 'TMTC' part II it could've either blown up huge or at the same time we could also no longer be around and I wouldn't be here talking to you!

Yeah this could've been a "where are they now" piece!

Exactly. You know when we were recording 'The Burning Red' we all had a great feeling about the album, we didn't and I still don't feel weird...I guess if there was one thing to feel weird about was our whole look and things like that. But musically and the sound of the album and all that is still cool by me.

After the touring is complete for 'TBR' it's time to regroup for another album 'Supercharger'. What do you remember about this period?

I really don't know what it was about that whole time, but to me, honestly there's four or so really good songs on that record. Some of the other stuff, to me is really bad and even at the time of writing it, it was really kind of stale...

Really?

Yeah it wasn't exactly a great time.

I guess I'm blown away hearing you say this. I always thought being in the band the perspective you see things through makes it clearer than what a fan sees.

Yeah that's true you do but at the same time if you personally aren't into something, a song or whatever but everyone else is really into it you'll see it through to see how it comes out. But to me a lot of the songs just didn't go anywhere or do anything for me so looking back I'd have to say I guess it's the record I'm least proud of.

How was working with Johnny ?

It was cool, he brought in a different way of doing stuff and he had his own ideas. Johnny was more of a song guy, where some producers would be like "yeah, that part's heavy" or something he was more in tune to the song itself. I don't want to say more on a pop level, but geared more towards radio and that's what he knew. But looking back I don't think it was the best decision for us...but to me, everything happens for a reason.

After the touring was done Ahrue is out, how do you look back on the Ahrue years?

I think when he came into the band we knew he wasn't this Metalhead guy, we knew we weren't getting another Logan in the band and that's not what we were looking for. We also knew what he had done in his previous bands, what songs he wrote and they were different, but that's what we wanted at the time. As time went on and we wanted to start getting heavier he wasn't into it and rightfully so as he wasn't that guy in the first place. Even during the recording and then mixing of 'Supercharger' votes in the band were always 3 to 1 and things like that. In the end he then told us he wanted to do a side project yet he'd commit to one more album with Machine Head and that's not at all what we wanted.

The period we've come to now is well documented in the making of 'Through The Ashes of Empires' on the DVD. Before I get to that I did want to know about you co-writing a lot of 'TTAOE' have you always been a songwriter or was it something that just came to you?

I'm just kind of a riff-writer so for 'TTAOE' we didn't have another songwriter in the band so I started writing if for nothing else to help Robb out a bit. So I just started writing as much as I could and would record things, even if I hated

something I'd still turn it over to Robb. He'd listen to it and liked a lot of things and changed up a lot of things. So a lot of it was shitty a lot of it was cool and most of all a lot of it spurned other ideas.

So back to the 'Making of 'TTAOE" What was it like revisiting this period of time?

It was a bad time for sure but being able to look back on it now is a good feeling. A good feeling of "look what we went through" and what we did to survive. As Machine Head we seem to go through some fucked up shit, there's times it feels like it's every record we do we have things to get through. So watching the making of and talking about that time I'll say it again everything happens for a reason. And it's up to the person going through the hard times to use that reason as a positive or let it continue to be detrimental.

Is it uncomfortable to watch the segment? I know you weren't crazy about some of the footage being on there. Not really but it's such a truthful account of that time, it happened you know? I do like the interview segments because we all did them at different times and no one knew what each other was going to say or what "guidelines" we had, if any. But watching it it's like we were all finishing each others sentences (laughing) we had a pretty good recollection of that time.

How important was it to get Phil Demmel in Machine Head?

Getting Phil in the band was like getting another Logan in the band, only better. He's a killer guitar player both rhythm as well as lead, a good writer and by that I mean a heavy writer too. When Phil started jamming with us he wanted to play some of the songs off 'Burn My Eyes' that we hadn't played in a long time, that's the shit he's into. So having someone like that in the band challenged us and in particular, Robb. For a while we didn't truly have a lead guitarist, yeah Robb's a killer rhythm guitarist who's also an accomplished lead player but Phil can really fucking shred! Right from the start they pushed each other to become better and not only that but attitude wise it was great having Phil around as well. He's far from the "uh, I guess I'll do another record" kind of stuff. He was and is still super gung-ho and it's killer.

With the release of 'TTAOE' you began a touring cycle that was pretty fucking intense. How cool was it to bring 'TTAOE' to everyone?

Well to have an album, any album that you do come out and be accepted like 'Through The Ashes of Empires' was is just fucking awesome! 'TTAOE" definitely put us back on the map. But being able to do the amount of touring we did in support of the album, yeah it could be grueling or whatever but when all of this was "that" close to being over... you tend to appreciate everything a little more. We were able to do two full on tours of Europe with the festivals like Download, Wacken, Rock Am Ring so it almost felt like when I first joined the band, only better.

Speaking of Download (2004), talk a little about your Metallica audition.

Dude, I didn't get to audition.

I thought you did? Fucking Blabbermouth!

I was backstage hanging out with Chris from Slipknot and some guy runs up and asks me if I knew any Metallica tunes and I was like "Yeah." And he said "cool, I'll be right back" so I thought maybe they were doing some sort of Metallica tribute or something and then I heard Lars wasn't there. Vinnie Paul comes up to me and say's "Hey man, you know a lot of Metallica songs, right?" and I said "Yeah" and Vinnie say's "cool, because I don't want to do it" and I could see why, he was pretty drunk at the time (laughing). So I went and hung around the Metallica trailers and I could hear them jamming with someone, it was either their drum tech or Joey from Slipknot and I hung around as long as I could but they had whoever they were going to use at the time. So that was my almost Metallica audition!

Good story nonetheless right? Let's talk about the present with the release of 'Elegies'. Definitely a long time coming, are you sick of it yet?

Well as of today it's been a while since I watched it last, but I'm definitely not sick of it. It's just one of those shows, one of those shows where the people in the band are having such a good time we don't want to stop playing.

I know you guys pulled out all the stops, the pyro and production etc. Were you nervous going into the show?

Dude I was nervous for a few months before we even shot it! I just wanted to make sure we were in that groove of playing every night and I wanted to be there from the first show of the tour. So when we hit it [the groove] I was nervous, just a little because I wanted to make sure we kept it up until Brixton. But the day of the show I was just like "cool nervous" just hoping no one's amp blows up or nothing too major goes wrong. The pyro was fucking killer, even during the rehearsals it ruled!

Filming was done in London, which is the second live release (also 2003's 'Hellalive' CD) for Machine Head done in London...

Well London's kind of like a home away from home for us, just like Chicago is, you know? So deep down we know the shows are always going to be killer. But most of all we just wanted to make sure we got it right. Kind of like Slipknot's 'Disasterpieces' with all the cameras and even their showing the crowd and the band before the show was something we dug. So we're definitely happy with the way it turned out.

How glad are you that the "official" video release is one that turned out like 'Elegies'?

Totally! It captures not only one of the best times for the band but when we set out to do something like this it has to be done right. We could've done a few things over the years as far as a home video goes, but I don't know how they would've come out. With 'Elegies' we took our time with it and sunk a lot of our own money into it so what you get is not some piece of shit thrown together.

Can't let you go without asking about 'Dave Unleashed'! You're not right son.

(laughing) Yeah, what can I do? (laughing) That whole thing started as we were watching other DVD's and we saw the Evanescence DVD. They're cool enough people, we played with them at a festival and they were nice enough people right? So we watch the DVD and there's a segment called Unleashed. So I'm thinking you name a segment called unleashed and there's going to be some kick ass Pantera home video type shit right? So their unleashed was like a few of the guys throwing grapes at each other and then one of them catching them in his mouth and I'm like "that's unleashed?!"

I think people liked seeing the other footage with the fans as well the Scottish kid will go down in history...

Oh dude, that's just our fans, that's on a nightly basis we could've gotten something like that on film every single night if needed. That's all a part of the day–in-the-life of **Machine Head**. But the boobs that made it in the concert, that's not on a nightly basis, unfortunately.

Oh you mean, "thanks lady", he's like "lady! I never say "lady"...

Yeah that's because there's usually not more than one lady in the crowd every night (laughing)!

RIVERRED - How The West Was Won

A few years ago I became aware of a band from the Seattle area called ***Riverred*** *and shortly after I was sent a copy of their self released debut album, 'Save Myself'. It's by all means a cool disc but it's the sound of a band who were proudly wearing their influences on their sleeves. Truthfully I expected more of the same when I heard of the imminent new album,,* Western Empire'. *The new album, set to be released right around the time this issue prints (Feb 06) and I have to just sit back and rave. This is an album full of some of the most rock solid shit I've heard I a while and the new stuff as heavy as is (metallic mechanical rock) it expands on many different levels and I hope to turn a few of you on to them. I spoke to guitarist/vocalist founder James Francis.*

Midwest Metal: I think you'll be a new name to a lot of our readers so let's get some background info on Riverred.

James Francis: The band started a few years ago while I was living on the East Coast and I was getting fed up with that whole kind of existence, the commuting and all that. So I started writing some songs and as that was happening I decided to move back home where I had a high school friend who was a drummer. I had a handful of songs that we worked on and recorded but at the same time we didn't take too seriously as it was mostly for fun. We started playing some house parties which led to legion halls which led to clubs and us doing some touring as well as releasing records. But initially that was how this all started and this takes s to the release of 2003's 'Save Myself'.

What type of styles or sounds were you originally writing? Most bands start at one place only to evolve into their current form. Was that the same for RR?

I'd say from the very beginning to the time 'Save Myself' was released it was just me trying to emulate things I liked. I know that was just from not having the confidence to try and branch out and try new things. Listening to the debut it's so clear to see, but once I was able to try my own path things definitely got a lot more interesting. But it was a rough learning curve to say the least!

Let's talk location you guys are right outside of Seattle. How's things there and what are some of the advantages and disadvantages of being from the area?

I'd have to say one of the advantages would be it's not like we're from Los Angeles where everyone is on top of all the trends and things like that. Sure we had our share of bands that painted their faces and had a DJ maybe five years ago. We're sort of able to create in our own little world up here, but the downside of that is that we're in our own little world up here! You really have to make an effort to get out and play for people. If we were in North Dakota, that would be way worse! But at least here we have this gateway to California, which I think we're actually a lot more popular and draw way more people down there than at home.

Now with 'Western Empire' you've added ex-Gruntruck guys Tim Paul and Norman Scott (Bass/Drums). Do you think the addition of established musicians help or hurt the band?

I don't think it hurts as most music fans have a very positive reaction to Gruntruck. But it's also funny if it "hurts" as virtually everything was written before I even called Scott...and no discredit to anyone as we four are the ones that made this album happen, but I just can't see it as a bad thing. You know part of the problem with the previous line up was I was turning the corner from the 'Save Myself' styled stuff and I don't know if they just weren't into it or if their confidence in me wasn't there, but that's why that line up fell apart.

On your website there's a story blurb from the NY Times that's pretty shocking. How important is the concept behind 'Western Empire' ? The whole Wal-Mart thing is pretty scary.

Extremely important. I had the title of the album before we even set foot in the studio. It was an idea, not exactly a concept album, but it's something I wanted to take a stab at saying this album is a package. In the old days you couldn't separate the art from the music like these days with mp3's and all that. I'm trying to show the art and concept is just as important as the music. The idea behind 'W.E.' has several different meanings, one is definitely the Wal-Mart effect in the mid-west. If people are aware of an area that used to have ten prosperous towns but now it's only one and it's the one with a Wal Mart and the freeway, you'll know what I'm saying. It's depressing. To grow up with a certain sort of culture and community only to see that way of life destroyed. We're not trying to be some Rage Against The Machine activist band, we come across way more subtle, but it is something to think about. I don't judge people for shopping there but I do think they need to be aware.

With 'Western Empire' getting ready to come out how much more of an accomplishment is it seeing how close you were to giving up?

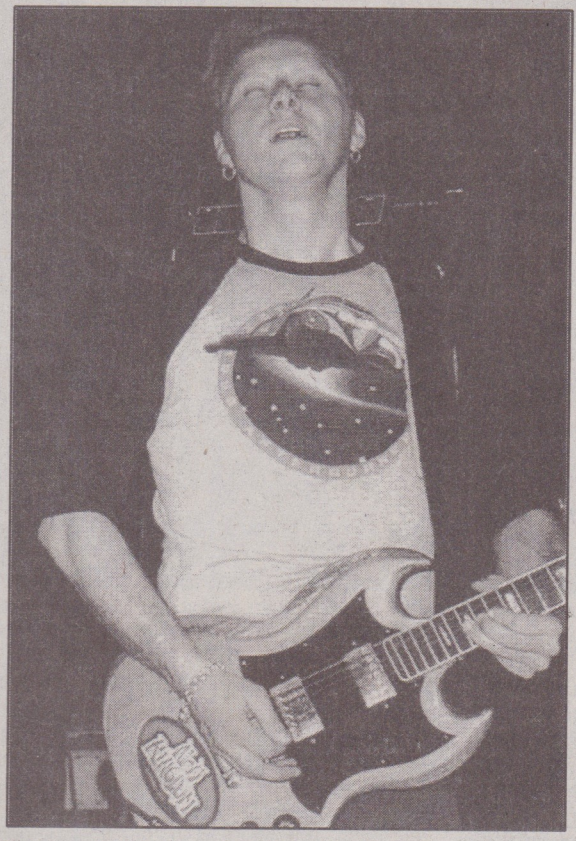
I was done. Honestly I was just done. A good friend had left the band and I was questioning everything. But no matter what you can't fight the song. You can try to keep it at bay but there's no ignoring it. In that first month when everyone bailed on me I wrote seven songs...so I figured I may as well do this! So yeah it's a huge accomplishment I feel I'm exploring new areas and some deeper and darker personal matter, there was definitely a few songs that were hard to get out. I was also into having the lyrical intensity match the music and it's something I worked on. I think a song like "Berlin" captures that perfectly.

www.riverred.net

SONS OF OTIS

*One of the most underrated bands to ever grace the world of heavy music has got to be **Sons Of Otis**. For those scratching their heads, the Sons are a band from Canada who play some of the heaviest yet trippy space Doom I've ever heard. Where most bands feel the need to force an image down your throat to help describe the music they play Sons Of Otis simply play and once you truly understand their "trip" the rest falls into place rather nicely. Like a lot of bands in the underground the story of Sons Of Otis is not just about music but also survival and perseverance having been through the wringer as far as members, labels and opportunities are concerned. The band is currently celebrating their 10th year of existence with a brand new album titled 'X' which was released on Small Stone Records in 2005. I spoke to guitarist/vocalist Ken and I suggest those into the heavy check this band out*

Hate to start off on such a "typical" question of influences, but most heavy players in the Rock/Doom world usually use Iommi as an influence yet the seem to miss the fact that Mr. Iommi was essentially a heavy Blues player. You seem to have taken this style and run with it. What got you going early on? Well before I even played an instrument I knew what I liked and what I wanted to hear. I've been around the block a few times and my Mom was a, I guess you could say hippie. So when I was a kid I heard Hendrix and Janis and all kinds of stuff from that era and I was into that right away. When I started getting into the heavy stuff later on, the first band that really got me going were the Melvins and Fudge Tunnel...those two bands really changed something in me when I heard them. It wasn't Metal you know? It was just heavy. And while I always have and will listen to the Blues you know Trower, Jimi, Stevie, Albert King the big guys, when I heard the Melvins, they were doing something nobody else way doing and it was just pulverizing. My drummer at the time, John, he lived for this stuff too and we just said to one another "we're gonna play lower and slower than anybody, ever!" And we started to, we started to mix that stuff with some psychedelic blues and Doom and just tried to make our own thing, but Melvins were so huge for me.



So your first stuff is similar to what you're doing now? Well John and I were doing our thing, trying to be the heaviest band around and we just thought people were going to hate what we're doing. So we played a few shows and people started to dig it which made us laugh because it was that ridiculously heavy, but people liked it. It was also strange because this is when we were a lot younger and we were just full of hate and we'd go out there and just crush with this attitude you know? But while that's something that changed musically I just always wanted to be heavier and trippier than before. But the goal has always been to just do our own thing.

I know over the years you guys have had moments where you weren't sure what was going to happen with the band, whether it was the drummer situation or a label or whatever the hell else could go wrong. What was the bleakest period in Otis' existence? Jeez, there's different levels of bleakness chief (laughs)! I mean there's been so many! But if I had to think of the absolute worst time... It's just so hard to say because like I said there's just been so many, just thinking about all of them is making my heart beat too fast (laughs)!

So when do the songs that would become 'X' start to brew? This is a tougher question than it sounds, I mean this thing has been sitting for over a year...We had been playing two or three new songs when we did the US tour and after the tour I really started writing when TMC pulled the plug on the studio. I had most of the stuff ready to go when that happened and when it did it was weird, I mean the whole focus changed all of a sudden it wasn't about songs anymore, it was where are we going to get the money to do this and who's going to put it out? We had to start from scratch and that seems like so long ago, but it was, I mean I had Billy Anderson's flight booked and the money was supposed to be in my bank account and then everything changed.

Now all of your releases, you either produced or co-produced. Do you think there's a producer out there that you could hand over complete "control" to? The thing with that is you know what you want to hear and it's always this person be it a producer or label guy telling you what you want to hear (laughs)! That's where I thought it would be good to work with Billy, I know he's into the heavy shit and obviously he has a better grasp on the stuff than most people. I had also wanted to talk with Joe Beraci, Joe knows his stuff too. But truthfully I would do the whole thing myself if I knew about all the gear and knob tweaking because it's

usually me telling the engineer what to do anyway. So Billy was good at that, he knows the studio as well as the music and it worked out even though we were in a shitload of trouble with that studio...I'm surprised any of it even made it to tape. The studio was a nightmare...

That's what I read and heard...

Everything was broke man, Billy, at one point said "take me to the airport"! I *think* he was joking but I knew exactly what he meant, we were ready to just smash shit. Everything was broke, nothing was hooking up so what you hear on the record is basically live, first takes of everything and while we're recording we're basically praying everything would work. It was a good idea for a studio, but fuck, these days no one even uses a live band to record, they record everything on a computer so this place wasn't even set up for a live band. So I give Billy a lot of credit for doing every thing he could.

How was that for morale?

Man, Ryan was just pissed, just off the handle pissed. Frank and I were saying we're in this church, we've got Billy Anderson, this is going to be the best and then it turns into the worst experience, ever. This was Ryan's first time in the studio with us and he's a bit younger so he can be hot headed and even though he played great I think all the bullshit affected him a bit. We jam all the time so I know exactly what he can do under the right circumstances and the studio was not one of them! In the middle of it all I'm standing there looking up at this giant, 100 foot high stained glass Jesus thing and I'm looking and looking and I finally said out loud, "you got something to do with this?"

So let's talk about Ryan who, like you said joined in time to tour the US and has been in since.

Ryan's just lives for the slow stuff, he's like a baby Dale Crover, we're happy as hell with him and his playing and he's totally committed to the band and doing it, rehearsing and just getting the whole vibe.

'Songs For Worship'. On this album you were able to step things up as a band as well as tour the US. How do you look back at the album/songs now?

Well back then as we were preparing to do the album we had a friend playing drums, he wasn't there rehearsing or writing with us he just recorded it for us. So right there you get a totally different vibe. Tony Jacome is his name and he plays in a band called Shallow North Dakota, solid guy, solid drummer but if he were *our* drummer things would have been much different. But we laid the tracks down for him, he played them fine. A lot of people commented that it came across as a bit sterile and not so "jammy" but because of our situation we didn't really "get into" everything, but Tony bailed us out by doing the album.

I do remember that 'Songs...' was released on September 11, 2001 fucked huh?

Oh yeah, that black cloud has been with us for quite some time, it's almost like it had to come out that day you know? Then the labels distribution went bankrupt five or six weeks later...

I don't think timing was ever TMC's thing you know?

Trust me, I know (laughs)! But we were touring on a record that was already a year old and in that year there was the talk about the 10" and damn if everybody we met that was into the band wanted the 10" and that killed us.

How was the Electric Wizard Unearthly Trance tour for you?.

That was an interesting tour, to say the least (laughs)! I mean what can I say; we're riding around on a million dollar tour bus driving to shithole bars in the middle of nowhere which I always thought was funny. The bus was bigger than most of the places we played but thankfully I wasn't the one who set it up and any money we should've made went right into the bus. But it was an experience, it was a good way to experience some shit out there. We'd done Europe in a bus so to do the US like that we saw a lot of things, learned a lot of things. It was cool to just finally give people an opportunity to see us and we were just as glad to see them! But I'll give Eric credit for the tour, not many people would stick their neck out like that, so that was a cool thing.

Back to the new album, were you ready to release 'X' by yourselves if Small Stone had not?

Yeah we thought about it, that's for sure. I had labels contact me and I don't know how many people were all set to put it out, but they all wanted to put it out without giving us any money for it! I mean we had to pay back the studio costs amongst other costs and all of a sudden these labels wanted free records that happened so many times, man. I mean we're not Guns n Roses or something but we've been around for ten years, we've got Billy Anderson who recorded us, it cost us thousands, basically everything I had and now I'm supposed to give it to you? But Small Stone stepped in.

So what is next? Since 'X' was in the can for awhile has that given you a jump start on a follow up?

Yeah, we've got some new stuff right now, we're always working in new stuff. I think the very next thing may be a re-issue of some older stuff that people write and email about constantly the main one would be 'Templeball' and I actually have a different master of it that no one's ever heard before so that may be the first thing we do. A lot of things depend on the labels and who wants to do what, we'll have to wait and see.

sonsofotis.com

DEMIRICOUS

After receiving 'One: (Hellbound)' [Metal Blade] *in the mail it only took one listen to know I wanted these guys in this issue. Indianapolis, IN based* ***Demiricous*** *have been kicking around since 2001 and it's obvious they've done their homework. Blending several different shades of Metal into their sound has given them the edge to stand out amongst the flooded shelves and soon-to-be-gone fad Metal. Definitely students of the "Big-Four" as well as the 90's edition,* ***Demicrious*** *with some insane amount of touring could be well on their way to something. I spoke to Bassist/Vocalist Nate Olp a few weeks before 'One : (Hellbound) was set to be in stores (01-24-06) and here's how it went.*

Midwest Metal: Give us the Readers Digest bio of the band.

Nate Olp: It all starts with myself and our guitarist Scott Wilson, we've been friends, uh, since like birth! You know growing up, skating etc. We'd never messed around with music though. We then met our drummer Chris at art school where we all went, and we decided to form a Thrash band. Chris was in a Black Metal band at the time but that was fizzling out and we really wanted to jam with him. So it was us three, two guitars and a drummer just fucking around with riffs and from there it progressed. It was like sooner or later we just started believing in what we were coming up with, I mean to us it was good! So we knew we needed to fill out the line up and we got Ben (ex-Upheaval) to play lead and the rest of the guys convinced me to switch to bass and sing. Once the line-up was solidified and more songs started to get written we were all just so into it, having a ton of fun and then we started playing shows. We did a demo in 2004 and continued to play shows etc. Did another demo in 2005 and these demos were just for us and our local scene, the stores here were always cool about selling our stuff but these demos were sent to labels or anything like that. Mark LaFay is a guy out here who manages Haste The Day and Still Remains, both bands are doing pretty damn good and we saw him one night, we were all drunk and raging and said to him, "fucking manage us, come on, why not?" right? So he checked us out, liked what he heard and went for it! So Mark was the guy who got our music into the right hands and in the end we hooked up with Metal Blade.

Speaking of Metal Blade, how insane was that press release saying, in 81 you got Metallica 83 you got Slayer so on and so forth and in 06 we get, well, you!

Yeah, it's kind of fucked up, we're a brand new band and even more fucked up to mentioned in the same sentence as groundbreaking bands! We're only doing what motherfuckers like that taught us, but seriously it's cool that they think we're doing something good, good enough to say positive things about us.

The album is called 'One (Hellbound)', obviously it's the first album, does it mean anything else?

Nah, we just wanted to keep it simple. Similar to the way it works in punk rock band, this is 'One', the next will be 'Two' the only difference is the subtitles, which they'll all have. 'Hellbound' was the house that Chris, myself and our roadie lived in, we called it the hellbound house and it was the shitbag hangout! It's the place we had the wildest parties, destroying things and where no one gave a shit about anything yet the best of friends were made there so when it was time to name the album, 'Hellbound' just sums up the past three years. We try to involve our friends in everything we do, so it's a tribute of sorts.

Are any of the songs on the album older ones that maybe were on demos or all new stuff?

There's two songs, 'Vagrant Idol' and 'Withdrawal Divine' that were on the 2005 demo. They're the same as what's on the album, no changes or anything like that. It's funny though because this record has been written for so damn long, it take forever to get a record ready to come out! It's been done for like a year and a half.

I was going to ask you about that, I originally thought I saw some advertising about the album coming soon, that was at least six months ago.

I do know it was supposed to be out in September or October (2005) but it was pushed back until January 24th and I'm glad it did.

How much emphasis are you putting on touring?

Nonstop, all year...period. That's all we have to live for now, it's all we have we've all got shitty jobs we don't give a fuck about and can't wait to quit and we have to go with it. We're doing a few things in February and in March we start a full US tour with Still Remains and that includes a few shows in Canada, we can't wait.

How's the response been to the album as far as press wise?

People are into it, man...the whole thing with the band is we were just not into what's hot right now. The Swedish thing? To us when At The Gates did 'Slaughter of the Soul' that closed the book on that style right there, yet everyone is *still* doing that style...to death. Which is fine, that's cool and all but I just don't care to hear it anymore. We never set out for a style, when we'd get together to write everyone brought their riffs out it sounded like late 80's/early 90's Thrash. So the people checking it out right now seem to be on the same level as us, we like what we're doing and I think people are enjoying it because it is a little different. I think they're just glad it's not another "metal-core" release! I do think people are getting it and that's all we can ask, if it makes a Thirty year old Metalhead feel like they're fifteen again, fuck yeah.

Everything starts off nice with "Repentagram", killer song, killer title.

When I first thought of the name "Repentagram" my first thought was "how cheesy" but the more I heard it and threw it around I started loving it and went with it. It works out great because if you check out the lyrics it ties everything together. Metal nerds will like it because that's what we are. But the title we're thinking all the old fuckers will know what we mean and the kids will find out sooner or later!

I also think "Beyond Obscene" is pretty catchy too.

We wanted a song that was almost like an old Hardcore song, like a trucker kind of riff...there's a little bit of a "mosh" feel to the song, simple but with a groove that's easy to catch on to. With the whole album we really wanted to do everything we're capable of. It all goes back to keeping it simple, a song doesn't have to be all note-y all the time, a lot of what counts to us is the groove. Listen to old Sepultura, underneath the gnarly stuff was a solid drum beat and groove. So that's not only what we paid attention to, but what we all love.

Paid attention to?

Well when we listen to music as fans it seems like some bands don't pay attention to the whole song. the entire song. Some will drive the blast beats into the ground until you want to scream "chill out!" But that's just my opinion and yeah there's a ton of bands who *have* to do that style because the music calls for it. But the type of album we wanted was to have all of it, some blast, some groove, some of everything and just let the shit breathe.

You guys recently shot a video. I find it crazy not only because there's a lot of bands shooting videos these days, but you *know* yours will be shown on MTV...that's fucked. That's got to be pretty cool.

It was fucked up, but it was fun...we did it for the song "Vagrant Idol". Which is probably the oldest song on the record, really old (laughing). We flew out to New York and did it with that dude Dale [Resteghini] and he was awesome to work with, totally cool guy made everyone feel comfortable and just takes care of business. Doing a video was fucked because it's like faking your song over and over and over (laughing). So we shot in Queens, NY "jammed out" all day, it was cool.

Have you done press in Europe? I was wondering what they've had to say...

I've done a few e-mail interviews for web press over there, we'll see when the album comes out. Most interviews are pretty much the same I mean we're a brand band we haven't done much yet.

Other than touring what do you think the future holds for the band?

That's about it. Like I said I'm ready to tour 300 days a year just to stay busy. Try to do everything we can for the band from the ground up and have a good time with it.

www.demiricous.com

Pure and unadulterated THRASH F*CKIN METAL!!!
SHOVEL HEADED KILL MACHINE
EXODUS
OUT NOW!
"Fans of the Golden Age of Thrash are pining their hopes on a rejuvenated Exodus for a musical ass-kicking."
-Brave Words & Bloody Knuckles
New blood injected to the machine includes Paul Bostaph (ex Slayer, ex Forbidden) and new singer Rob Dukes
www.exodusattack.com

KATAKLYSM

Coming February 20th is the highly anticipated new album by **Kataklysm**. Titled 'In The Arms of Devastation' it promises to be the next step forward in the ever evolving world of the band known for pushing the envelope of extreme music. I spoke to Vocalist Maurizio Iacono to get the details on the new album.

MM: Wrap up the 'Serenity In Fire' era for us. The album and how you look at it two years later and the touring of it.

Maurizio Iacono: It was a very successful album, it became our biggest selling album ever and two years later I'm very satisfied with it. I would of worked on the production a little more but we had time constraints, this time luckily we had time to fix and adjust the production, our way...I never have regret for any of our accomplishments. With 'Serenity...' we were able, for the first time to jump on major tours so the Cannibal Corpse and Danzig tours really helped the band expand.

When did you begin writing 'In the Arms of Devastation'? Why the title? Was there anything you wanted to do different for 'ITAOD' that you had not done before?

It took about a year, on and off, to write. In between tours we'd write and I would say during the spring/summer (2005) we really worked hard and got everything we wanted to do, done. We emphasized on melody and more of a thrash element on this one which is two things we always had in Kataklysm's previous albums, but never really explored much. So we decided it was just a logical thing to do but without betraying the bands sound and brutality as this is who we are, a diverse death metal band that tries to push the limit. We never repeat the same album but you always know its Kataklysm, that's something hard to do today.

Recording for Kataklysm seems to be down to a science these days, but what can you tell us about recording 'In The Arms...'?

This time J-f did everything himself except the mixing. I would say this was the weirdest thing after all these years of having your guitar playing producing your band. It was different and more nerve wracking then trying to top our previous record and it really felt like being a stranger in your own home! But J-f wanted to do something different for this one, he felt it was time to introduce some fresh blood and we went for it. He chose Tue Madsen and under J-f's supervision mixed and mastered the album and the result of mixing Euro and American sounds together has been phenomenal it's our strongest production to date!

Since 'Serenity' was recorded have you tried to incorporate any different vocal techniques?

I just tried to have a better flow with words and breath coordination. What I've worked on the most over the years is having the brutality of the growl but the annunciation and pronunciation down pat so when I sing/scream my words come out brutal but understandable. This is something I'm very proud of and not many singers can do. I've also experimented with some new delay effects and distortions on certain little parts on the album which came out really cool.

Lyrically or musically has there been anything surprisingly "influential" on 'ITAOD'?

We just analyze our previous albums for what went well and what didn't and then we try to combine what makes sense. We knew before we started writing, even though lots of it is spontaneous, that we wanted a more dark/melodic, thrash feeling to the album. We wanted Kataklysm to rise to a new level while keeping its brutal origins, that was the goal We are Death Metal band and we don't forget that. It's who we are and we're proud of it! Our inspiration is our drive to feel like we always have something to prove and that every album we do we treat it like if it was our debut. In Europe we've risen to a leader in the scene, we easily rank in the top 3 DM bands there and in N America we've gained ground dramatically during the last few years. I've always said to my guys "Let everyone talk shit or not give us opportunities, let the music speak, because in the end they can't deny the fans."

If I'm not mistaken, ITAOD has been done for bit just waiting to be released. How important was it to take as much time preparing for its release (press/promo etc.) as writing/recording?

These days its everything! Especially with all the releases coming out, one on top of another. You need that push to stand out. We had the record done, but we decided to wait a few more months as 'Serenity...' was still somewhat fresh. Now the fans are hungry for it, we get emails everyday from people counting the days to it's release. The reviews coming from Europe and even America at the moment are phenomenal, really unbelievable! It's been an incredible first few weeks of promo and truthfully it's kind of freaking us out a little! We just think it's a logical continuation to Kataklysm so I guess this one is just hitting a bigger nerve.

The DVD that will come with the album. Isn't it a crazy sign of the times that people need "extras" to prevent stealing?

The show is from Strasbourg, France recorded during the 'Serenity In Fire' tour. I think your right I don't think our label would have released this extra DVD at no cost if it wasn't for illegal downloading.

I know you guys have received some prestigious awards from your home country.

Well it is really cool to be recognized like that but it took Canada 15 years to say "hey these guys released 7 albums, toured in 24 countries and never passed more then 2 years without releasing an album. Nobody has ever done that in Canada even in metal, lets recognize them." In the end it's just that an award, but it was cool. I'm releasing a book called "The Northern Hyperblast: Uncut" in 2006. It will reveal lots of things and will be a very good read, trust me.

www.kataklysm.net

REVIEWS

CD, Cassette, LP, DVD, Magazine etc. If it was sent in or purchased it's reviewed here.

1349: *HELLFIRE*-CANDLELIGHT

About as unrelenting as it can possibly get without being noise, **1349** simply detonate on 'Hellfire'. This is a balls out onslaught, Black Metal in the current day should sound like this or Carpathian Forest. Blazing intense drumming courtesy of the mighty Frost...fuck it's great to hear him just lay it down, the whole time! Malicious as all fuck 'Hellfire' with any luck will be a landmark kind of album able to influence a generation to keep killing. **legion1349.com** =Tom=

ABORTED: *THE ARCHAIC ABATTOIR*-CENTURY MEDIA

Aborted has improved a whole lot! Their death/grind is tighter and sharper than ever and they have added small doses of melody to their attack, I have to say the future's looking good. It's cool that this band is trying to make things a bit more interesting, instead of the usual gore. Well, on this one, in the midst of seriously superguttural vocals and the grind riffing the melody shows up and it sounds shockingly good. **www.goremageddon.be** Mauricio

AKERCOCKE: *WORDS THAT GO UNSPOKEN DEEDS THAT GO UNDONE*-EARACHE RECORDS

This is a band I have never cared for. I get annoyed with their sound as well as their ideas which seems to me are the same on every album, until now. I hear a better version of **Akercocke**, one more rooted in a sound version the constant musical flip flop I remember. While I don't hear the severe identity crisis [guttural death metal for a minute then switching to a Jazzy/melodic passage etc.] I usually do on their albums 'Words That Go Unspoken...' is probably their most "listenable" album to date. This one's a keeper **earache.com**

THE AGONY SCENE: *THE DARKEST RED*-ROADRUNNER

I'm not too crazy about the title of this album I'm guessing 'The Darkest Red' beat out 'Dark My Eyes'? Regardless I was somewhat liking this. Its total Revolver-Core but a lot of the riffs are fucking heavy and catchy in their own right. The vocals aren't half as bad as the shit I see on Headbanger's Ball and the production is not as bright as on a lot of albums in the genre. It's really strong semi-crispy but still pretty dark in it's own right. **www.theagonyscene.com**

ANNIHILATOR: *SCHIZO DELUXE*-LOCOMOTIVE RECORDS

I give Jeff Waters all the credit in the world. In a recent interview I read with the man he seems to have a great outlook on his career and honestly after reading this piece I couldn't fault him or his record. Annihilator has always been a solid band, experimental to a fault but always existing under a creative umbrella. The new album, 'Schizo Deluxe' is a taste of the **Annihilator** I remember and for that it's succeeds to these ears. A good blend of modern-ish sounds meets classic guitar shredding and riffing. **annihilatormetal.com** Tom

ANTHRAX: *ANTHROLOGY-NO HIT WONDERS (1985-1991)* AND *ALIVE II*-ISLAND/UNIVERSAL

We'll start with the 'Anthrology' which is a 2 disc set of, essentially, all things created by **Anthrax**, the Belladonna years. Yes, it's all here the good, the bad and the awful and listening to this brings back so many memories, also good, bad and awful! Not to burst anyone's bubble here, but what is the point of this? There's nothing rare, obscure or even cleverly disguised as a "have to own" present so I'm not sure who's attracted to such a release? Up next is the 'Alive II' release. A CD (and DVD) of the reunion isn't the worst thing in the world, definitely worth a listen. **www.anthrax.com** =Tom=

THE ATOMIC BITCHWAX: *THE ATOMIC BITCHWAX 3*-METEOR CITY

The Atomic Bitchwax write catchy as hell songs and some have that "this reminds me of something but I can't remember it so this must be good" feel which is cool by me. Like I was saying what they're doing here, to my ears is totally original in the world of, um, fuzz rock. No not gay like Fu Manchu, but somewhere sorta close. The vocals are something that it took a little while to get used to. They're not edgy or aggressive as what I'm used to with this music so at first I felt they were just totally mismatched. After a few spins and the songs worked their way into my brain I couldn't get enough. **theatomicbitchwax.com** =Tom=

BLESSING THE HOGS: *THE TWELVE GAUGE SOLUTION*-GOODFELLOW RECORDS

I think the first song on this album "Botched Messiah" is one of the best songs I've heard all year. **Blessing The Hogs** are a band that seem to have mastered the art of sonic destruction. All sorts of weird booms and pops in the speakers every so often drives that point home. The music underneath these bombs is up-tempo assaulting blasts of metallic power-core, ultra-crust from the depths of Oakland, CA. Headed by figurehead Billy Anderson BTH are a wrecking crew that maintain an aggressive stance throughout the entire album, no small feat with material this fucking twisted. **www.blessingthehogs.com** Tom

BONGZILLA: *AMERIJUANICAN*-RELAPSE RECORDS

Easily, this is the best thing this band has ever done. **Bongzilla**, Madison, WI cultivators of all things green return with the slab of music you almost never knew they had in em. Bongzilla have always gotten by on their ideology and being involved in the scene but at times the music wasn't up to par with the rest of the package. Well that's finally changed with the release of 'Amerijuanican' they're producing some of the coolest sludgefuzzdoomdopedoutrocknroll music I've heard from this style in a while. 'www.relapse.com =Tom=

BIOHAZARD: *MEANS TO AN END*-SPV RECORDS

Right off the bat, I'm a sucker for old school [1990-1995] **Biohazard**. I've heard this is their final album and while that's definitely in their best interests, this is the way to go out. 'Means...' sounds pretty refreshing in the scene where Metal-Core has now come to be recycled Swedish Metal riffs and scream-o vocals, forceful melodic drivel and third rate, at best Hatebreed clones! Where is the A.F. /Cro-Mags inspired, Sabbath loving, Heavy Metal-Core? Well here's a bit of it and while this isn't the best thing the band has ever done it's the best in a decade. **swww.spvusa.com** =Tom=

BREAKNEK: DEMO

There is a certain type of U.S. Midwest metal sound that has growled/screamed vocals (inspired by Pantera, more than any other band), chug/thrash/death guitars and breakdown-oriented drumming. The lyrics are always centered on general hate. More than anything, this is the type of rock that a lot of kids form in the small towns of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, etc. because they are bored out of their minds. It's not original and it's interesting only to the band and their friends. Red neck metal anybody? **breakneck.com** Mauricio

CONFESSOR: *SOUR TIMES*-SEASON OF MIST

Probably one of the most original bands to exist in the Sabbath realm was and is North Carolina's **Confessor**. Some of the old-timers will remember them as the twin black sheep in the Earache family along with Sleep, who broke up in 1994. So unless you've been living under a rock for the past year or so you'd know they've gotten back together and judging by the two new songs on this EP they've aged

really well. "Sour Times" is the main track here in its entirety and a (pointless) radio edit and it's a heavy in so many ways killer. **www.confessorband.com** =Tom=

CRIONICS: *ARMAGEDDON'S EVOLUTION*-CANDLELIGHT RECS

What is cool about this band is that: 1) they play fast, blasting black metal; 2) they make their songs distinctive from one another, not relying on speed alone; 3) they add melody, but the type of melodies which are not clichéd/happy/overly sweet; it's subtle and slightly twisted. In addition, 4) the vocals are black, but there's a lot death in them, so fans of brutal death can totally get this; 5) the guitar work has plenty of creativity to spice up the huge barrage of noise. 6) The production is not garage, like those one-man projects. Sounds like a collective effort. There are a few other interesting things: they cover "The Loss and Curse of Reverence" by Emperor, which is probably the closest reference point, especially the 'Anthems...' period. Very promising. **www.crionics.rockmetal.art.pl**
Mauricio

DAMIEN THORNE: *HAUNTED MIND*-SELF RELEASED CD

Damien Thorne is a Chicago band from the mid-to-late 80's that I remember as I had their 'Sign of the Jackal' LP way back in the day. The revamped Damien Thorne is definitely a Metal band rooted in the old ways and this is good for more than the obvious. There's several different styles of classic Metal here because that's what bands used to be able to do. 'Haunted Mind' has some killer songs, some fast, some doomy in a Dio in Sabbath vibe, some just strong hard rock tunes. Great leads, vocals are not high pitched, they're strong and old school. Great job.
www.damienthorne.com =Tom=

DARKBLACK: *THE BARBARIAN'S HAMMER*-HOT DOG CITY RECS

Definitely children of the old cloth **Darkblack** make their presence known in a loud way via 'The Barbarian's Hammer' a five track EP that reeks of 'Heaven and Hell' era Sabbath and dirtweed. Classic Metal Fest would be the prefect outlet for this Lancaster, PA band to spread their word and here's why. No frills Heavy Metal is only played two ways, totally convincing or totally weak. Darkblack are definitely convincing enough to warrant a look and listen, especially fans of Snakepit Magazine and their tastes. Like I said Classic Metal with some speed involved and a vocalist that can wail his ass off.
www.myspace.com/darkblack =Tom=

DARKEST HOUR: *UNDOING RUIN*-VICTORY RECORDS

In what will truly become one of the finest Metal albums of 2005, 'Undoing Ruin' starts strong and just pounds away until there's nothing left of you. I've been writing about my dislike for the ninth generation of Swedish Death Metal pretenders and frauds for so many years now. Pointless, right? But when I hear perfection in the art I have to call it like I see it and 'Undoing Ruin' is about as complete as it gets. All the prerequisites are here as far as the melodic stuff (vocally and musically) but fuck if **Darkest Hour** hasn't upped the ante on all fronts. **www.darkesthour.cc** =Tom=

DEBRIS INC.: *S/T*-RISE ABOVE RECORDS/CANDLELIGHT

For some, the union of Dave (St. Vitus) Chandler and Ron (Trouble) Holzner can subject up a few mental jukeboxes in ones head. The first thing you think should be coming out of it would be something like "Born Too Late" meets "Run To the Light" right? Well that was the first thing I thought of too so their self described "Happy Violent Drunken Stoner Doom Punk" was a shock to me. Yeah, sure Ron would tell anyone with an ear that **Debris Inc.** was "my and Dave's Punk Rock band". Well after all these years and several live shows I understand what this album is about. It's an album of basic to-the-point straight up Punkish tracks played by Doom Metal legends. Definitely different than what you'd expect, but definitely a party album as most of the record is upbeat anthems of hard and fast living. **www.debrisinc.com** =Tom=

DECEASED: *AS THE WEIRD TRAVEL ON*-THRASH CORNER

In the late 1990's Virginia's **Deceased** began a stride of producing simply killer albums. There was something undeniable about 1997's 'Fearless Undead Machines' and each one since. These albums were even stronger due to the fact that the entire listening experience was of pure quality, no filler or half ass to be found. I'm happy to say 'As The Weird Travel On' continues this fine tradition, amazing especially when you think of the road the band took to get here. After a long delay in which the band has added a member, left the label they were with for what, 12 years? (Relapse) Finally and most importantly they waited patiently for King Fowley's medical issues to be under control they're finally back! 'As The Weird...' finds the band, probably, at their strongest yet. The album opens strong with "The Kept" and "The Funeral Parlors Secret" and it only seems to get better from there. For Traditional Metal with Death, Progressive and classic elements all over the place Deceased has never sounded so, uh, dead. **www.upthetombstones.com** Tom

DEFLESHED: *RECLAIM THE BEAT*-CANDLELIGHT/REGAIN

Man, I haven't heard shit from **Defleshed** in a long time and everything that I remember from before is back and even more intense. Opening with "Stripped To The Bone" Defleshed just throw down the gauntlet and go for the throat. The production just jumps out at you like a clear uppercut to the jaw so the songs just connect at a deeper level. You've heard the rest of the Swedish Thrash wanna be's with their melodic shit and MTV smiles, fuck that! This is violent, this is killing. This is Defleshed! **www.defleshed.de** =Tom=

EARTH: *HEXX: OR PRINTING IN THE INFERNAL METHOD*-SOUTHERN LORD

For a while there, it seemed as if the legacy of **Earth** would exist to revolve around the Kurt Cobain folklore and their influence on the mightily popular Sunn 0))) - never to be heard from again. When the announcement of the Southern Lord/Earth pairing happened people lost it, it was surely the second coming of 'Earth 2' right? It had to be. I guess I'm both sorry and thrilled to say it's not. Sorry because it would've been cool, if the band we're actually feeling that, it's obvious that's not where their heard are at. For the most part 'Hexx...' is a far more organic type of album, the tones are not as punishing yet they crush. The "drones" are there yet in higher frequencies so they almost encourage thoughts other than devastation, make sense? All I know is it's an original as fuck album with Dylan's signature stuff all over it. Unassuming and creepy 'Hexx...' is a statement.
www.thronesanddominions.com
=Tom=

EARTHRIDE: *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*-SOUTHERN LORD RECORDINGS

To me the first few Earthride releases were Motorhead meets Melvins meets Maryland with the unmistakable vocals of the man, Dave "sherm" Sherman. Not too much has changed in the past few years, musically it's still 100% **Earthride** but a more melodic aware Earthride. On the past releases the band has come across as good, solid, heavy whatever you know? But at the end of the day it was good and all, but definitely one dimensional. On 'Vampire Circus' the band definitely branches out a little and invites in some diversity here and there and succeeds at doing it. I get a very distinct "Down" vibe from the album and you know what? Nothing wrong with that it sounds damn good. Memorable moments on the album are many and this is definitely a step forward for the band and definitely worth the wait.
www.earthridedoom.com =Tom=

EYEHATEGOD: *PREACHING THE END TIME MESSAGE*-EMETIC RECORDS

It's fucking **EYEHATEGOD**. It rules, nothing more to say. Really quick, 'Preaching The End Time Message' is a new compilation similar in spirit to the 'Southern Discomfort' comp released a few years back, this one compiles the more current 7"

releases. In addition to those are four new 4-track recordings from March/2005. For the curious to the complete-ist this is an over view of New Orleans favorite sons so get on board because the more the merrier. This is the word, this is the truth, this is **EYEHATEGOD**. Long may they suffer. **emeticrecords.com** =Tom=

GRAND MAGUS: *WOLF'S RETURN*-RISE ABOVE RECORDS

Swedish Gods **Grand Magus** return with a souped up version of their sound and invite the bloodthirsty to dig in. 'Wolf's Return' takes the foundation of the 'Monument' album and spices things up just a bit but with impressive results. Noticeably faster paced, the songs that comprise 'Wolf's Return' are more memorable than the previous material so grand Magus continue to create enjoyable listening experiences almost at will. Ever since their S/T album in 2002 GM have shown zero drop in quality. I think Grand Magus are still rooted in the post doom school of rock but the almost thrashier riffs and Maiden-ish harmony parts sound extremely natural and create a new route for them to explore. **www.riseaboverecords.com** Tom

GRIMFIST: *10 STEPS TO HELL*-CANDLELIGHT RECORDS

I remember being pleasantly surprised by 'Ghouls of Grandeur' the debut album by **Grimfist** when it came out back in 2003. I had expected a full on Black Metal attack but got a severe Thrashing and loved every second of it. Two years and a new drummer later Grimfist return and what can I say? They've done it again. A fairly decent blend of all things extreme (heavy on the Thrash element again!) and a well paced album is really what '10 Steps to Hell' is and I think it may surprise some of you. I'm sure you can hear a sample or two somewhere, so do it. **www.grimfist.com** =Tom=

HE WHO CORRUPTS: *THE SMELL OF MONEY*-EUGENICS REC LABEL

Decent "unkind mind grind' if you will. **Hewhocorrupts** are probably most known for their 'Master of Profits' album that came out a few years ago. The cover was a direct "homage" to the Metallica album of a similar name; you may have seen it before? Anyway this new ep is just a grind fest of a fairly entertaining nature...this is one of my least favorite styles of Metal so I don't know if this is actually that good or not. The idea behind it and the presentation (digi, video clips etc.) is top notch so I hope they're good.
www.hewhocorrupts.com =Tom=

HERMANO: *DARE I SAY*-METEOR CITY

This may be one of those "John Garcia could sing the phone book and I'll buy it" sort of review because it's pretty fucking true, ain't it? Well that being said the latest by **Hermano** is another solid album of rawk that fans of their debut will most definitely eat up but the rest of the world? I guess there's nothing wrong with preaching to the converted but for some reason as cool as this is it's pretty standard fare. **meteorcity.com** =Tom=

IMPALED: *DEATH AFTER LIFE*-CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS

These eight songs are all about Carcass' "Symphonies" and "Necroticism": the combination of the low and midrange growling and the muddy-but-catchy riffing. This is surprisingly memorable and even melodic. **Impaled** has always been a promising band, but I think this album shows a real development. The songwriting has improved a lot and I remember that I liked this band's Carcass remake better than its own songs. Well, now they are progressing and perfecting. I look forward to their next album. Some people will criticize this band for being a Carcass rip-off. This band takes that as a compliment. **www.impaled.info** Mauricio

INDIAN: *THE UNQUIET SKY*-SEVENTH RULE RECORDINGS

I've seen this band live and was always into it, this album pretty much shows me why. First of all they're fucking HEAVY. An onslaught of 'Gluey' era Melvins meets the heaviest of current pure DoomMetal meets it's own beast. There's nothing here truly innovative so if you're one of those people looking for the next new thing, move on. If you want doom the way it's should be, **Indian** deliver. **indiandoom.com** Tom

IVORY KNIGHT: *UNCONSCIENCE*-SELF-RELEASE

This group is 100% traditional, oldschool heavy metal. I'm just guessing, but the influences for this band are most likely the New Wave of British Heavy Metal and probably other bands that continued that sound, like early Armored Saint and Savatage. Listening to this I hear virtually no influence from thrash, much less anything else that's trendy right now. You'd be surprised how different this music is compared to all the metal of today. This is definitely for fans of oldschool heavy metal, for people who also like to check out more obscure bands, like Breaker. P.O. Box 38144/1430 Prince of Wales Dr./Ottawa, ONT, CANADA K2C1N6 **www.ivoryknight.com** Mauricio

JACKNIFE: *MOMENT OF RECKONING*-ZERO SUM RECS

For some reason the onslaught of modern Metal coming from my speakers actually sounds a bit, refreshing. It's been so long since I've listened to this stuff, it sounds good. Almost like a PanSlayer or SlayTera or MachineBreed, really crushing yet powerful groove. **Jacknife** are a Texas born band of shit kickers who've learned from the best, they had to. 'Moment of Reckoning' is not the band re-inventing anything just doing their take on Pantera inspired Metal and coming across rather convincingly. **www.jacknife.net** Tom

KHOLD: *KREK*-CANDLELIGHT

I missed a **Khold** album somewhere, at least I think I did. I remember getting 'Masterpiss of Pain' a few years ago, a decent album but nothing really that incredible from what I can remember. 'Krek' however is really, really fucking good! It's not at all fast and needlessly chaotic it's slow, heavy and fucking catchy! Almost in a Satyricon way it's just so heavy and rockin' yet pretty cold. **candlelightrecords.com** Tom

MUNICIPAL WASTE: *HAZARDOUS MUTATION*-EARACHE RECORDS

How cheap is it of me to basically quote the back of this promo CD and try to pass it off as a "review"? This sounds like D.R.I. meets Anthrax but the riffs are better than anything Anthrax has produced in a decade plus. Frantic Crossover Metal at it's finest right here, right now. **www.earache.com** =Tom=

NIHILIST: S/T-THREEMAN

How cool is this? Time to toss that seventh generation copy of the 'Only Shreds Remain' demo Daniel and co. at Threeman have the ultimate tape traders treat right here. The prequels of the mighty Entombed and Unleashed both begin here with **Nihilist**. Featuring several raw as fuck demo versions of tracks that would eventually make up the timeless classic that is 'Left Hand Path', as Nihilist they were just fucking kids!! Not that they all of a sudden aged for the debut, but you know what I mean. So this disc is the four widely known Nihilist demos from the years 1988 through 89 when later that same year they issued the first taste of the 'Tombed. I hope this a trend of sorts, for bands/labels to issue classic demos. **www.threeman.net** =Tom=

LIFE OF AGONY: *BROKEN VALLEY*-EPIC RECORDS

'Broken Valley' sounds like nothing out there right now. I hear some modern rock influences on songs like "Last Cigarette" and "Don't Bother" but then I hear classic LOA in a song like "The Calm That Disturbs You" and "The Day He Died" and also some darker John Lennon/Beatles type stuff on several tracks as well. This is a pure rock album with some incredible textures and influences that come together over its 12 warmly produced tracks. I think of this record as one long song, it's not a very long album and each time I listen to it I make sure I have the time to do so, it's rewarding. **www.lifeofagony.com** =Tom=

MINSK: *OUT OF A CENTER WHICH IS NEITHER DEAD NOR ALIVE*- AT A LOSS RECORDINGS

While it seems that the Neurosis influencing styles of abstract-y meets crushing is at an all-time high, it's still something to hear a band pull it off so well that you don't think about the influencer. **Minsk** do their own take on the above style with a vengeance of few others. An urgency is present as the listener is taken on a trip of both sound and mind arriving at a place where you feel something after the journey/listen. Monstrously heavy, 'Out of a Center...' is a record that needs to be absorbed, it's abrasion factor isn't diminished as time goes on either.

www.thesoundofminsk.com Tom

NATTEFROST: *TERRORIST*-SEASON OF MIST

Out of all his side bands and projects there's something about **Nattefrost**, the "band" that's hard to describe. Pure as fuck and raw as hell 'terrorist' picks up where 2003's 'Blood And Vomit' left off with more grimness than you can shake a stick at. Getting some help from Dirge Rep (ex-Enslaved) and Carl from Dodheimsgard 'Terrorist' is like a satanic tornado all you can do is sit back and watch it destroy.

www.season-of-mist.com =Tom=

NEVER ENOUGH: *DEAD SET ON DESTRUCTION*-ORGANIZED CRIME RECORDS

Hailing from current hardcore hotspot Baltimore, Md. come **Never Enough**. They play a refreshing brand of youth crew oriented hardcore comparable to Strife and Shutdown. There are 27 songs on this CD, some from an upcoming release, some from an older one and some live stuff including a blistering cover of Poison Idea's "Just to Get Away" and finally their 2003 demo. 'Dead Set on Destruction' is a great way to get introduced to this worthy band. So if you like your hardcore straight up with no frills then Never Enough is a band you need to hear

organizedcrimerecords.com

Art the Hardcore Drunk

NUCLEAR ASSAULT: *THIRD WORLD GENOCIDE*-SPV

Very quick review here. Totally disappointed, totally let down and totally bummed out. 'Third World Genocide' is something a lot of people have been waiting for and now that it's here I wish it were never released. For the most part 'T.W.G.' is a mid-tempo paced record with a few thrash like tendencies and plenty of groove and with very little qualities of the **Nuclear Assault** I grew up on. Sure it's got some joke/funny things on here but that's where the similarities end because the fierce and unrelenting NA just didn't show up. **www.nuclearassault.us** Tom

RAGING SPEEDHORN: *HOW THE GREAT HAVE FALLEN*-SPV

Don't ask me why, but all previous **Raging Speedhorn** music I've heard was always a bit too British for me. I'm not talking Iron Maiden-ish but it was something like that. Maybe it was a bit of a forced sounding melodic edge to music that didn't really need it, or at least I thought it didn't. Their newest album is called 'How The Great Have Fallen' and the once forced recorded output of several distinct style of Metal (crust, punk, traditional, sludge, death-like) has come together to form quite a killer album. If you're into the heavier end of the NOLA movement as well as (toned down) Hatebreed styled Metal Core then Raging Speedhorn could be quite the purchase.

www.spvusa.com =Tom=

RAMALLAH: *KILL A CELEBRITY*-THROP RECORDS

I'm going to go out on a limb here, but in my opinion there aren't too many "musicians" or "artists" in the world of Hardcore/Punk rock, at least not on the level I'm seeing it from. To me the artist or whatever has to be someone who's not afraid to do things that aren't their usual fare and not give a fuck while doing it. **Ramallah**'s Rob Lind (ex Blood For Blood) is one of those artists. His previous work was always in a state of evolution and his current work is still pushing boundaries when it comes to songs and his use of raw/harsh melodic passages. 'Kill A Celebrity' picks up where their debut release, 'But A Whimper' left off but for all intents is a much more focused and heavier album that hits on subjects near and dear to Lind's heart. Metallic punk core with some amazing musical moments is what you could expect here with a surprising cover of the Beatles' 'A Day In The Life'.

www.thorprecords.com =Tom=

RINGWORM: *JUSTICE REPLACED BY REVENGE*-VICTORY RECORDS

I know this type of Hardcore still exists, in fact it's never really went anywhere except in my head where it disappeared years ago. However every now and then I'm reminded why I cared about this music in the first place and **Ringworm** are a great reminder. Brutal and aggressive as hell, this Cleveland band obviously walk it like they talk it in delivering a deadly mixture of Metal and Hardcore that is instantly well received by this fan right here. A thick recording helps this album come across like a boot to the head and the vocals of the Human Furnace have never sounded more pissed. Cleveland Hardcore has a rich history and Ringworm do their city proud.

www.ringworm13.com Tom

SCENTERIA: *ART OF AGGRESSION*-CANDLELIGHT REC

Armed with big, fat, thrash, Slayeresque guitars, **Scenteria** sounds pretty cool. The sound is interesting because the Swedish, tuned-down guitars have a massive, fat feel to them. Yes, they are Swedish, duh. The vocals are growled, but do not stand out as a sore point, instead they mesh with the overall sound. The whole band is a big, massive rhythm section! In addition, I like this because the thrash does not sound boring, like most thrash. This is not lame thrash like Overkill or Flotsam and Jetsam or something mediocre like that. There's more: they have melody, but---and this is important---they keep the melodies subtle, which works really well because they add to the mood, as opposed to making you think that they want to add power metal to the mix. The album has gotten better with more listens, for sure.

www.scenteria.com Mauricio

SCUM: *GOSPELS FOR THE SICK*-CANDLELIGHT RECORDS

I know he's totally "into it", I've seen him shop at Metal Haven for chrissakes, I have a hard time getting into Casey Chaos music. So the very thought of his involvement in the organization of the "supergroup" known as **Scum**, I was almost not interested before I even heard it. Well Samoth, Faust, Chaos and others look good on paper musically, it's totally hit or miss. There's a few songs on 'Gospels...' that I would listen to again just not too many. Track six, 'Hate The Sane' was the first song that I actually got into and it wasn't until #9 "Backstabbers Go to Heaven" that I perked up again. "Hate..." is a rifftastic crusher and "Backstabbers..." is the "punk-est" thing on the album. The final song "Perfect Mistake" is interesting for several listens. For one it features vokills by Nocturno Culto and secondly it's the best song on the album. Very thrashy and dark, mid-paced, vocals rule and it's a killer of a song. Lots of misses, but great hits! **candlelightrecordsusa.com** Tom

SEVERE TORTURE: *FALL OF THE DESPISED*-EARACHE RECORDS

Severe Torture has come a long way since their inception in 1997. Their earlier stuff was very one dimensional and very, very Cannibal Corpse-ish, dull really. Since then releases haven't been the greatest, but always solid enough to make an impact. Their latest and first release for Earache is called 'Fall of the Despised' is easily their best album yet. The Dutch band has always sort of lived in the shadows of their famous countrymen Sinister (like Behemoth to Vader) really come into their own here. "Endless Strain of Cadavers" kicks things off and while some of the CC is still there this sounds somewhat fresher to my ears and really sounds good. Very clear and surprisingly heavy production makes this a solid release.

www.severetorture.com =Tom=

SOURVEIN: *EMERALD VULTURE*-THIS DARK REIGN RECORDINGS

Not long after their Southern Lord debut, their second release over all, 2002's 'Will to Mangle' I've wondered what happened to **Sourvein**. I knew Liz joined Electric Wizard but that was about it so I was pretty happy when I read there was a new EP coming soon. 'Emerald Vulture' is a four track of new material by T-Roy and a whole new line up yet it is almost a continuation of 'Will...', well sort of. The biggest thing here is this almost sounds a bit either thrown together or hastily recorded/jammed. I think the material is good, track three "Witch Rides Out" is one of the best songs that band has done yet but I'd like a full album of '...Mangle's' excellence but first it'll be a few more EP's, so I've heard. **www.sourvein.com** =Tom=

SUNN O))): *BLACK 1*-SOUTHERN LORD RECORDINGS

Sunn O))) have created one of the coolest albums I've heard in many, many years. If you're familiar with the 'White' albums or anything from the earlier catalog you somewhat know what to expect from the band, right? For those who don't. It's insanely bass heavy, bowel emptying loud sonic drone. No drums, no lead guitar, no set amount of vocals, sampled sounds here and there, evoked from robe wearing metallic Neanderthals. Well with 'Black 1' they've really captured the primal essence of late eighties/early ninety's Black Metal aesthetics coupled with their Earth inspired, above detailed, drone. The results? Creepy, dark, and triumphant. 'Black 1' succeeds on many different levels but the ultimate level is in it's effectiveness in being the complete package. Guests on the album only add to the impact. **southernlord.com** Tom

TRIVIUM: *ASCENDANCY*-ROADRUNNER RECORDS

On their debut album, or at least the first one I ever heard from them (Lifeless/Lifeforce) came out I remember there being a buzz about them. It was the "age" thing that seemed to fuel the buzz seeing the band was so young yet somewhat accomplished. So after a move/jump up to Roadrunner Records and an amazing start to their latest album, 'Ascendancy', **Trivium** once again have my ear so let's see what, if anything has changed since I last heard them. Instantly the sound of this album is unmistakable, very heavy with a great, great guitar and drum sound. I think their melodies have gotten stronger as they don't sound as forced as I thought the last one did...this is more impressive than I thought it could be. **www.trivium.org** =Tom=

TWILIGHT: *S/T*-SOUTHERN LORD RECORDS

I've probably listened to more Black Metal in 2005 than in the past 10 years, what the fuck? As most of you know **Twilight** is a collaboration of several prominent figures in the current Black Metal underground (featuring members of Leviathan/ Lurker of Chalice, Xasthur, Krieg, Nachtmystium, and Draguar) who have joined forces to create their own monster. So the self titled album definitely stays true to their main bands with it's colder than thou feel and sub standard recording but is it any good? Hard to really judge this thing on a good/bad scale but I will say it definitely captures a vibe that feels cold as fuck and that's all that counts now isn't it?

www.battlekommand.com =Tom=

V/A: *ARMAGEDDON OVER WACKEN LIVE 2004*-MAGICK REC

This three disc set commemorating the 2004 edition of Germany's annual Wacken Open Air contains all the subgenres of Metal and are broken up into three categories, 1: Black, Death and Thrash, 2: Power/ Traditional and 3: Underground. There's a ton of bands like Dio Cannibal Corpse, Unleashed, Motorhead, Cathedral, Raunchy, Mnemic, Children Of Bodom so on and so on. Good recordings, tons of energy from all bands and a well put together package makes this work checking out. But at the end of the day it is a live album and that always limits how much you could possible listen to this, a DVD would work better. **www.magickrecords.com** =Tom=

WET ANIMAL: *S/T*-ESCAPI MUSIC

Featuring Guitarist Rick Wartel of Trouble fame, **Wet Animal** is a hard rock band with a knack for infectious melody. Dark and a bit on the alt side the band has some good songs with some very good hooks. Imagine an Alice In Chains-ish meets a classic rock foundation and you get a quick glimpse of what's in store for you. Cool stuff here but I'm really looking forward to some new music from the band as some of these have been around in demo form for some time now. Cool and definitely worth checking out. **wetanimal.com** Tom

WITCHCRAFT: *FIREWOOD*-RISE ABOVE RECORDS

What is it about a debut album that is so special for good bands? Is it because it's the first time you're ever hearing a certain "perfection" that will never be experienced the same way? The s/t by **Witchcraft** was one of those debuts, one of those where the follow up will be good, but ah...not as good. 'Firewood' is a bit more modern sounding that the s/t and the songs themselves are pure Withcraft, very 70's Blue Cheer/Sabbath/Pentagram worship with the vibe the band specializes in. My only disappointment with 'Firewood' is the vocals are way too loud in the mix and kind of bug me. Other than nitpick a solid as fuck record that gets better each time you listen to it. **riseaboverecords.com** Tom

METAL MEDIA

ANTHRAX: *ANTHROLOGY-NO HIT WONDERS THE DVD* AND *ALIVE II DVD*-ISLAND/UNIVERSAL

Again we'll start with the 'Anthrology' which here is a collection of all the promo videos from the Belladonna years. Similar to the 1991 VHS release 'Persistence of Video' 'Anthrology''s strength is definitely in the band commentary section. While commenting on the videos (everything from 'Madhouse' to 'Bring Tha Noize') it's funny because you can totally tell they're like three different bands in one. There's Charlie and Scott (Gene and Paul) who are still concerned about being "cool". There's Frank Bello who's got nothing better to do and then Dan Spitz and Joey Belladonna. All Spitz talks about during the videos are watches and Belladonna keeps bringing up the stupidest stuff he can possibly remember which is instantly ignored by Paul and Gene. Seriously it's like his words are non existent. He even brings up Billy Milano during the "Indians" video because I'm sure he has no idea of the beef between Gene, Paul and Billy...no clue! Cool collection though, no doubt. The commentary rules! 'Alive II' is a live show from New Jersey and like reunion the live show, kicks a lot of ass! Bonus footage on 'Alive II' is a documentary of the guys meeting up for the first time after all these years which is cool to see and separate interviews about the band which is also decent. If you had to have one of all these releases I'd say the 'Alive II' DVD would be the must have. **www.anthrax.com** =Tom=

DOOMED NATION VIDEO ZINE: *ISSUE #2*-DVD

The doomed generation has once again been captured on DVD for your viewing pleasure and what a pleasure it is. Highlights are many, I mean where the hell can you see some of this stuff anywhere else? Soon-to-be classic footage of bands such as **Weedeater**, **Rabies Caste**, **Ramesses**, **Sunn O)))**, **Church of Misery**, **Lair of the Minotaur** and more begins to explains the magnitude. Similar to Issue 1, the current **Doomed Nation** mixes the best music with the sickest visuals and once again comes across as nothing short of essential. **www.doomednation.com** =Tom=

LAMB OF GOD: *KILLADELPHIA*-SONY DVD

'Killadelphia' is **Lamb Of God** captured on film in all their glory as they stomp across the world one gig at a time. Crystal clear and loud as fuck 'Killadelphia' takes you, the viewer on a behind the scenes look into the world of L.O.G. and exposes the good with the bad like rarely seen before. The band are one of the most devastating

things when it comes to stage presence and this shows why. This is a full show and has the band playing everything their fans want to hear though naturally focusing on their latest 'Ashes of the Wake' release. The behind the scenes shit is worth the price of admission as it too takes the viewer deep into life on the road but thankfully without the sacrificial blood, sweat and tears it takes to survive. An excellent watch as Lamb of God are at the top of their game and this simply documents it for years and generations to come. **www.lamb-of-god.com** =Tom=

MACHINE HEAD: *ELEGIES*-ROADRUNNER RECORDS

After quite a few viewings of the first ever DVD/Video release by **Machine Head** I'm not sure who will benefit from its release more...old or current fans of the band. For the current it's a full show recorded at London's Brixton Academy in front of 4,000 + lunatics. 'Elegies' is an amazing representation of the 22 month 'Through the Ashes of Empires' tour hand delivered to you on a shiny plastic disc. With a near perfect set-list covering all the bases 'Elegies' captures the band at what will definitely be referred to as their 'return to glory' and it's awesome. There's some backstage footage and background on the show's production (pyro etc.) for the night and a look at MH on the road. There are the videos from the album as well as behind the scenes footage for each. Cream of the crop though? A deep look into the soul of the band via the situations/ obstacles (member change, record label problems, direction and public perception) they faced making 'TTAOE'. It's a very honest and to the point portrayal of Machine Head. If you buy this as a non fan, you get all the above as well as watching one of the most underrated bands simply destroy! Love em or hate em you have to admit they're an incredible live band and this captures it. Finally! **www.machinehead1.com** =Tom=

MANOWAR: HELL ON EARTH PART I-SPV/MAGIC CIRCLE DVD

This is a re-issue of the classic **Manowar** home video from a few years back and if you've never seen this before you're in for a treat. The manly men of Manowar keep the cameras rolling on stage and off as 'Hell On Earth' shows the self proclaimed Kings of Metal in their natural environment, the road. Shot over several years (1996-2000?) at some of the biggest festivals around the World, Manowar deliver the goods on stage with a take no prisoner style famous the world over. Paired up with the live footage is a documentary styled look in the history of the current line up with interviews etc. While the music of Manowar cannot be fucked with, their personalities are the real stars of 'Hell On Earth' as a huge part of what made and continues to make this video work is the hilarity that ensues every time the music stops. These are priceless moments of comedic genius as band members do their best to keep up their image. **www.magiccirclemusic.com** =Tom=

V/A: *METALLIMANIA*-KILLING TIME PRODUCTIONS

Taking the concept of 'Heavy Metal Parking Lot' to the tenth degree is Killing Time Productions' epic screening of **'Metallimania'**. Basically turn back the hands of time to the 1994 Metallica/Suicidal Danzing Summer tour and watch as our host talks to fans about Metallica. Questions range from favorite member, favorite songs, stories about the band and interestingly enough, Rwanda. So what you get here is a few hours worth of banter from sun baked, buzzed up, Mullet wearin', camaro drivin'/NASCAR lovin', necks as red as fuck Metallibanger. A species that strangely enough, still exists. 'Metallimania' has several moments of pure genius and quite a few dull ones as well as some cool cameos (Big Jim Martin, Scott Ian and Metallica themselves come to mind) make this a damn funny movie. While not exactly a "must have" thing this can be enjoyed by many fans and non fans alike. **www.killingtimeproductions.com**

WIN A COPY OF THIS DVD!

The fine folks at Killing Time Productions want you to hit the lights and check out Metallimania...for free. They've given us 3 copies and I want to give them to you!* Send your name, address and favorite Metallica album to: M.M. PO Box 612 Downers Grove, IL. 60516 Attn: DVD

***US Residents only-Winners chosen at random. Contest Ends March 1, 2006**

TESTAMENT: *SEEN BETWEEN THE LINES*-ESCAPI MUSIC DVD

Man, is this a trip! I remember when this video was originally released picking it up (probably) the day it was released and loved every second of it! In retrospect this video captured **Testament** at the very height of their careers when they could do no wrong and I mean none. This video is basically the band acting like total rock stars (justifiable I guess, they pretty much were at this time) and going through the rigor moral of life on the road. The band themselves are not very entertaining hosts, inside jokes here and there do not make for captivating TV you have to be pretty outgoing to make things like this watchable. Alex Skolnick is about the most uncomfortable person I've ever seen in front of a camera so watching him try to be "normal" is painful, about as painful as Black Metal Warrior Eric Peterson doing the goofy shit he does, of course as pre-necro Peterson. There's a few promo videos for "Practice What You Preach", "Souls of Black", Aerosmith's classic "Nobodies Fault" and the ballad "The Legacy". Bonus material is more wanking of the band in Japan. This is decent for those who haven't seen this before, but if you haven't busted this out in the past ten years you probably don't need this. **www.escapimusic.com**

25 YEARS
Of
BLACK METAL
MMV
4 CD career-spanning deluxe box set. Features seminal studio recordings, demos, outtakes, rare tracks & alternative versions. Includes live & re-recorded material from the rare and highly collectable Assault series of albums. Contains a 60 page booklet with a collector's poster. Compiled and re-mastered by band leader Cronos.
BEST BUY

AS I LAY DYING

Metalcore in 2005/6 is about as original as ripping off...fuck it. It's not original and for the most part it's not that good. However there are always a handful of bands that do it better than the rest and one of those bands is ***As I Lay Dying****. Their latest release* 'Shadows Are Security' *takes the formula the band laid down on 'Frail Words Collapse' and pushes everything forward and then some. This interview was done by Mind Melt/CMF's Rodney Pawlak and myself at the Alpine Valley stop of Ozzfest 05 with vocalist Tim Lambesis*

Midwest Metal: As we speak everything is new for you guys. New album, tours, opportunities and hopefully a lot of new fans. How have your expectations been met half way through 05?

Tim Lambesis: Well I thought the build up to the new record would take longer than it did...it's taken off pretty quick. With our last album, 'Frail Words Collapse' it took us over a year and a half to reach 100,000 and to build that fan base. It was a week by week thing back then. Now in two months we're right where we were and I think it's all about the timing.

With timing comes opportunity and while you guys tour *a lot* you're playing Ozzfest. To be able to reach this many people every day has to be a challenge.

We've only done club tours, even our biggest tours have always been at a club level, knowing that we could excel in this kind of atmosphere... There are a lot of bands and the hardest thing is to get your band to stand out. We felt pretty confident coming into this that we felt we could stand out so knowing that, we couldn't wait for it to start. When I think about all the bands that I've toured with and all the bands I'd love to tour with, it's just Iron Maiden and Metallica, that's it. So to be on a bill with Iron Maiden is like a dream.

RP: How does the whole Christianity thing tie in to what you guys are doing?

Lyrically, once someone really digs into it and gets to know us on a personal level, I mean a lot of our fans are able to relate to our lyrics if they are Christians. However the approach that we take is a little more subtle. It's not very forceful but at the same time if anyone wanted to really view our lyrics from the Christian perspective there's a lot that can be learned from the spiritual side. Being on this kind of tour and playing any show in general, I think people pay their money to come and see a band play, they're not there to hear a sermon. I mean if people wanted to hear all my ideas on life then I'm sure there'd be interest for me to write a book or something like that.

Has there ever been any problems as far as beliefs and other bands, especially on the road?

No, we're a band that, no matter who the other band is we don't, like, judge them. There's a lot of bands with lyrics that may push personal issues or political issues and that's fine. We look at it like we respect them to hear what they have to say and we'd just like the same back.

One of the few things I know about your band is that, well obviously you're not just attracting Christian kids.

Lyrically, your words come across as human and not preachy. They're basically just words about life.

True, a lot of the lyrics aren't spiritual they're just about the day to day struggle but if someone misinterprets the original meaning behind the lyrics but it helped them in some way, I think that's a great thing. You don't have to be a Christian to understand what I'm writing about.

With the release of 'Shadows Are Security' you guys toured forever. How excited were you to begin writing/recording new music?

Yeah we toured almost two straight years behind 'Frail Words Collapse' I had forgotten what it was like to switch into writing mode. When we did I discovered again that I love that mode as much as tour mode. So when we started writing things came really quickly as we'd stored so many ideas. The whole writing process only took about two months yet we didn't feel rushed at all...most bands would freak about only two months but we were confident. We worked with Andy Sneap to mix and we knew he had an amazing ear for that so our main concern was to get the best performances out of one another as we could. And in the end Andy made the record sound better than anything we've ever done before, it was a huge step up.

Were you guys getting sick of the 'Frail Words Collapse'?

A little bit, yeah. What's funny though is now that we have the new songs in the set, it kinda makes more excited to play those old songs! But yeah we were a little burnt out on them for a while, sometimes it's impossible not to be you know?

Because of your DIY ethics the business, you guys have always had a grasp on things. Now that the stakes are getting a bit higher how are you dealing it?

Well this is our first tour utilizing a tour manager and definitely there a lot more things going on everyday so we delegate responsibilities a bit better now (laughs). Even though all the guys in the band are very reliable up until the last few tours I pretty much took care of everything. However doing that made me a bit more unfocused and in turn it may have took a little passion out of the music. Now we've got some help and although we're paying for that help, it's worth it.

www.asilaydying.com

Bill Ward

BLACK SABBATH

It's been eight years since I last spoke to Mr. Bill Ward, the legendary drummer for the one and only ***Black Sabbath****. That 1997 conversation was done during a very stressful time for Bill yet through it all he was as personable and professional as anyone I've ever spoken to in my life. Since that 1997 interview things have come full circle for Bill. He's healthy, happy, productive and performing at the top of his game keeping time for the greatest Hard Rock/Heavy Metal band of all time. I spoke with Bill while Sabbath was in Chicago to headline the 10th Anniversary of the Ozzfest and found the man to be as pleasurable as ever. When we spoke, there'd had been some problems with Ozzy's voice that was forcing the band to cancel here and there and while Bill was optimistic for the remainder of the tour, we all know it was a hard road until the end. I have nothing more to add other than to thank Ms. Liese Rugo for making this happen and of course to Bill Ward. To me speaking to the man was like speaking to a Beatle.*

Midwest Metal: Bill, pleasure to speak with you again. Let's begin, of course, with Ozzfest, you've been out for a few weeks now, how's everything going?

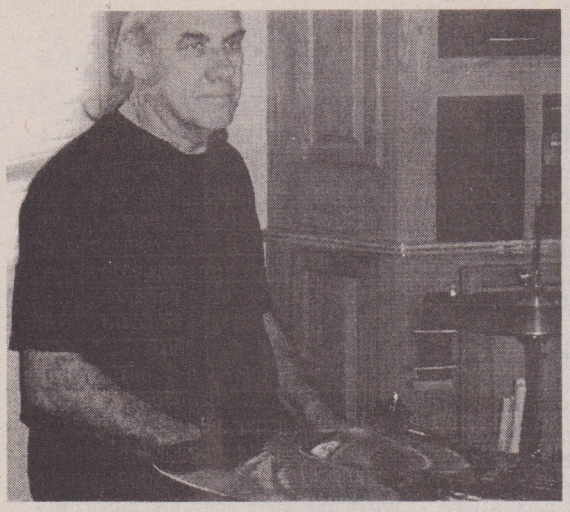
Bill Ward: My pleasure, Tom. Let's see, Ozzfest...well up until the last few days things have been going pretty good. Before the Ozzfest we did a tour of Europe and the reactions were just great! I thought the band played really well so we finished the tour really strong. In the last few days we've run into a couple of problems. Right now we're doing quite a few back-to-back gigs and we normally don't do those...and it's with very good reasons why we don't do them! Unfortunately Oz has run into a little bit of difficulty, so to be honest with you it's been a little stressful, a little bit disorientating. Right now we're not really sure what's going on as we still have three more back-to-back sets to do. So for me, and I can only speak for me it's a little unstable and while I'm sure it's the same for the other guys I can only speak for myself.

Have some of these things affected the show at all?

Yeah, we've had to cut back a little bit with the original show we were doing in Europe. We've taken some snippets of songs out and there's been a little bit of disintegration going on with the show. But I'm hoping we can reinstate it at some point very soon to where we were in Europe. I mean it was a pretty good show over there and unfortunately we don't have a lot of real hard, fast Rock songs in the set, which is really what we'd like to have. But we do have what we can actually do, in terms of the given situation and the parameters in which we work in. But in general things have been very good, but these last couple of days. We did have to cancel a gig in Holmdale, New Jersey and when we did play the first gig it was a bit rough and we did pick up some pretty bad press and stuff like that. We're intelligent guys, you know? We know what time of day it is, so to speak we know what's going on (laughing)!

Now when you mention the European tour...I've seen the reunited Sabbath six or so times since 97/98 and I have to tell you Ozzfest 2004...I was so blown away by Sabbath! I thought you guys played absolutely incredible. Would you say the Euro tour had you guys playing up to par of last years Ozzfest?

Yeah, I'd have to say so...what's been happening is since we got back together, year by year we've just been getting tighter and tighter. In hindsight, just to digress for a second, sometimes I wonder what it would be like if we were to get back together and play year round you know? That's some food for thought right there, huh? But yeah, year by year we've tried to get better and put on a better show. So last year I agree, and I appreciate your compliments and observation, but yeah I felt very good about where I was at. I felt I was at a very strong place as far as my drumming and I liked a lot of the things we were doing as a band, I thought we'd come a long way. I'll tell you this Tom, it was really tough to stop



playing last year because there was just so much energy and good vibes, it was like "man, why are we fucking stopping!" you know? I had a beef with that right there (laughing)! At the end of the Ozzfest I wanted to take the band around the World. So once we got going this year one of my goals was to try and get us into the saddle, quickly, just try to get past all the aches and pains and all the, you know blow the cobwebs out after a six month lay off. I mean just try and find the groove as quickly as possible. The European tour did just that we tightened up quick and we were able to maintain a pretty high integrity of playing. I think, for the most part, at least 99% of what we're doing right now is being played really well.

Personally I couldn't even imagine seeing Sabbath with some momentum behind you, it'd be pretty unstoppable.

One of the things right now about our show is, this is not resentment or anything, but more of a personal wish if you like. But I wish we could play some of our faster songs. Right now we're doing our usual, "doom laden" stuff (laughs) that's all really mid-tempo but we don't do anything that's faster across the board, nothing that we're really just belting out you know? And Sabbath is quite capable of doing these songs, but we're not. I'd like to see at least two or three really hard core rockers that we could kick the show up a notch or two, to use that paraphrase!

I think that would not only be a welcome thing for people like me, but it'd probably surprise the younger generation that Ozzfest attracts. When they think of Sabbath they tend to think what the local rock radio station plays, "Iron Man", "Black Sabbath" etc. But there's so much under the surface that would indeed blow a lot of people away.

It would be nice and another thing is we're playing with some fucking ace bands this year, you know? And I'm not saying we didn't play with ace bands in the past, we have. But this year on stage one [the main stage] alone we're playing with Shadow's Fall, In Flames, Zakk is playing better than ever! Black Label Society, that band is getting better all the time. Mudvayne is jamming really well too and of course there's Iron Maiden...they're a classic rock band and they come out and just kick ass! So it would be nice for us to have some of our classic fast ones as well to sort of even it out a little. So there's some squeaky stuff we'd like to work through so we can give a good performance as well. Here and there things are a bit different since we started Ozzfest than they were in Europe.

I'd like to jump in the way back machine with you for a bit and talk about the Blues. I mean before there was Heavy Rock and before you helped invent Heavy Metal, there was the Blues. There was this emotional music that spoke volumes even if there weren't a lot of words. Tell me about the Blues as it applied to Bill Ward and how the transition came about from Blues to Heavy Rock/Metal.

Well in Sabbath there's definitely the Blues influence as I'm sure you know but others may not. So when Ozzy, Tony, Geezer and I got together I'd say 90% of what we'd play were the Blues classics. At the time this music was sort of the underground to mainstream music in Great Britain, which was being influenced primarily by people like Eric Clapton, John Mayall, Keith Hartley's Blues Band, John Highsman Coliseum and by a man who unfortunately died only a few days ago Long John Baldry. So these influences which originated from the elder Blues greats like Muddy Waters, Howling Wolf etc. and most people don't know but these two guys were major fucking stars in Great Britain, enormous stars! We loved it when they'd come over and play for the people it was like nothing else! So yeah it evolved, as we all know but the Blues is the foundation to Black Sabbath for sure. On this last European tour during sound checks we'd spend most of the sound check playing Blues or Jazz for an hour or so and it was a lot of fun. I mean if some one had walked in and heard us it sounded like 1966 all over again (laughing)!

When you're at different gigs do you sometimes feel some of the "spirit" is missing from rock? A lot of the shows are very big business and because of that they are run rather rigid. A lot of times this crosses over to the bands themselves, do you miss the freedom bands like Sabbath had? Because in the early days of Rock/Metal it was a more "anything can happen" versus the run like a corporation of today's gigs?

You mean even ourselves doing a very well organized show?

Yes. Because when Bill Ward gets a call that you're playing X amount of gigs, before a thing is packed you know you'll that every night if you're not in the right spirit it can seem like "punching a clock" and I'm not trying to insult you with that. But you being you, you've played under every imaginable situation. It's something I know the artist in you has to think about.

Well I think one of the things that happened on not only last year's Ozzfest (2004) but also the year before was a certain, predictability. And one of the things that I got from the 2004 fest was I know, for myself I kind of reach a place where I really enjoy what I'm playing, I always do. But there was a predictability. There wasn't much progress or change going on. So a very deep, deep issue for me was if we ever were offered another Ozzfest-because we never know, we ha just found out in March we were doing this one. We start thinking about the show, we start talking how we don't want to do the same show as last year. I know that's not exactly what you're talking about, but that comes into the picture, at least for me it does! I miss the unpredictability, yes I do and I wish we would cut loose. I'd love to really cut a rug, to use an old term...what is that? From the 1940's (laughing)??!! But yeah, I'd love to throw down and go completely fucking berserk! I wish we could be up there, maybe be a bit controversial and just playing something else. That would be nice because I think we're all capable, and when I say capable I know we are because we've done them in the past

when there was just no predictability whatsoever! Structured shows...I've never been too keen on structure, you know?

In it's defense though, if we were talking about something like Ozzfest. Well the father in me-that works to feed people etc. I know business has to be run tight. I suppose it's the free spirit in me, and you too, that wishes it was a bit more "loose".

Well if I can add something, what I do in my mindset even before rehearsals are set. What I do is start thinking about what I can do, because I know certain things will be very structured, I start thinking about what I can do within these certain parameters. What extra things can I bring? Can I show up with something new? So in each song I'm looking to better it from my point of view. That's how it becomes livable. Because I think I would die a tragic death if I knew, "this is it"! So I have to show up and know I'm going to give my personal best. I show up wanting to do a little something with "N.I.B."...because you'll notice I never play the same thing twice. Primarily it's because I don't know how to play the same thing twice is the truth of the matter. So every single night I'm looking to move around what I have so that's how I express myself while maintaining the desire.

Where's Bill Ward at personally these days?

Well I'm in a calm place in my life right now. About three years ago I went through a really upsetting period, which I'm still recovering from. That was a family issue, but in general I'm really at a calm place. I'm really striving to become a better drummer. I'm always trying to learn, I really feel incomplete as a musician. Not a depressing incomplete though, just an awareness that drives me to learn and try different things. So in general I'm really happy about what's coming out of me musically. But I'm frustrated because I'm not getting enough of it on tracks and CD's! So I've got goals that I want to accomplish with my music that has been put on a shelf for a few years now and I'm just not in "that place" right now. So I'm trying to move things forward, complete an album, play a few shows, some acoustic shows and just finishing things up. There's also the possibility of another Sabbath album which would be, for god sakes, it's long over due but totally possible. I just wish it was something we'd just fucking do! Overall I feel strong; my health has been good I'm exercising. The past few days I feel as if I've lost a little edge, I'm not quite where I want to be. Tony and I took our usual long distance walk today; we try to do this all the time as well. But tomorrow I'll be exercising before the gig because we have two back-to-backs and I'm really hoping we are going to play them. If so I think I will have that edge back.

Musically, when you listen to, say the Iommi CD 'Fused'...does it ever, uh, upset you...I mean when I listen to that album I hear a lot of things that could be Black Sabbath...

Oh, absolutely...

So does listening to an album like that "upset" you?

Well it doesn't affect me in a negative way at all. I know that there are so many Tony riffs that, how do I put this? Let's just say I've taken a glimpse into the future and it looks very good (laughs)! And only because I've heard so much of Tony's work, so the new CD that they have is just another part of his work, if you like. But there is just so much more than that as well. But his new CD with Glen and Kenny, I'm in total support. I'm in awe of Glen's voice and I just love how they play together, bass and guitar. When you listen to Tony's riffs, it gives you a good idea of what a Sabbath album could sound like. Before we started rehearsals for Europe, Tony and I got together for about a week and I listened to the new album, spent time at his house and jammed out before rehearsals even started. The stuff we were jamming on and it was just the two of us warming up before we were set to warm up, if you will (laughs). But the things I heard, man, I heard enough for three Sabbath albums right there! So I think there's an over flowing well of music coming from Tony at all times so I feel really good about what could happen if we did create an album or albums because I don't want to stop with just one! Make albums of what we're feeling at the time because we've all been through so much as people. We're coming from different places and I think the music should and could reflect this rather well. It could be loud, dirty, kick ass and most of all real...

It's Black Sabbath!

Yes, it is huh? I'm having a good time with our jams and what's been happening, even though it wasn't planned, is these jams have been creeping their way into our set. Towards the end of the set I'll be doing this elongated type of drum fills and Tony's been throwing in a few licks here and there and we've been running with it a bit. So night after night I think to myself if these bits go on longer and longer each night soon we'll have an entire new song (laughs)! It's just a riff or two but it's so damn powerful.

Anthrax reunited with a few members not too long ago and they said one of the reasons for getting back together was more or less, "life is short and you never know what tomorrow will bring." Do you ever think that way about Black Sabbath?

Yeah, I know you're saying and none of us are getting any younger so I have to agree. I mean let's do it before some of us are 62, 63 years old and forget how to hold a fucking drum stick!

www.billward.com
www.black-sabbath.com

IN FLAMES

COME CLARITY

02.07.06

THE NEW ALBUM ON FERRET MUSIC — WWW.INFLAMES.COM

IN FLAMES 2006 US TOUR JAN. 25 - FEB. 24

CHECK OUT WWW.FERRETSTYLE.COM FOR DATES, AND MORE DETAILS!

TRIVIUM **DevilDriver** **ZAO**

FERRET MUSIC

Music Choice
Your Music. Your Choice.™

FOR MORE INFO ON IN FLAMES, OTHER FERRET ARTISTS, TOUR DATES, RELEASES, MERCHANDISE AND MORE VISIT: WWW.FERRETSTYLE.COM